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tion of the public morals, and for the exercise, developement, and wholesome sustenance of the public intellect. Nor will we waste a word upon the self-evident proposition, that our education will operate beneficially in proportion as it is perfected. It must be perfected, and that by providing better teachers.

The Normal school must begin with females, because there is more unappropriated female talent than can be brought into action ; because females can be educated cheaper, and, in the first instance quicker, and better, and will teach cheaper after they are qualified ; because the primary schools, which properly belong to females, are in the worst condition, and need most to be reformed, and because, by reforming these, we thereby improve all the higher schools. By raising up the foundation we necessarily elevate the superstructure. An improvement in the rudiments of education, among children of from four to ten years of age, would be felt through all the schools as these young scholars passed into higher classes. The public would perceive the benefit, and enter with alacrity into the measures necessary to carry out a thorough reformation.

Let the high work, so auspiciously commenced, go on steadily to its glorious consummation. Let Massachusetts, which for two hundred years has led the way in the cause of good learning, suffer none to go before her now. Let her still bear aloft the torch which others will be proud to follow. While others emulate her bright example, she will have contributed largely to that mighty movement, which is to enfranchise and to bless the world.

ART. II. — *The Writings of GEORGE WASHINGTON ; being his Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official and Private, selected and published from the Original Manuscripts, with a Life of the Author, Notes, and Illustrations.* By JARED SPARKS. Vols. I. and XII. Boston : American Stationers' Company. 1837.

THE two volumes now before us complete the publication of Mr. Sparks's edition of Washington's writings. The

American press has produced no work of higher value. The character of the Author transcends all vulgar praise. The interest of the events, which form the subjects of his writings, is inferior to nothing in history. The qualifications of the Editor, literary and moral, are of the highest order ; and his opportunities, every thing that could be desired for the skilful performance of his work. We may add, that the typographical execution is beautiful ; equal to that of any work, which has issued contemporaneously from the British press, except works avowedly of luxury, in which nothing is aimed at but the gratification of the eye.

We consider the publication of a standard edition of the writings of Washington, as a matter of importance in a national point of view. Of the auspicious influence of the principles of Washington over public opinion throughout the country, which happily is still highly operative, much must be ascribed to the unexpended force of his personal ascendancy and the freshly-remembered power of his personal intercourse. These, with the lapse of time, must daily grow fainter. His contemporaries are nearly all gone. Of those, who in any way took counsel with him, scarce one remains to counsel us. One solitary eyewitness of his exploits and risks on Braddock's field is known to survive. Occasionally, at a public gathering, a fourth of July assemblage, or a Cincinnati celebration, we have an opportunity of taking the hand, which Washington had taken. That trembling old man, who is groping his way towards a seat, was, at a time when his hands could wield something more formidable than a crutch, one of his body-guard at Brandywine and Germantown ; and here is one who saw him, when, pale with indignation, he encountered General Lee on his retreat, at Monmouth. As you come down to the period of his Presidency, the number of course increases of those, who were entering on public affairs toward the close of his career ; but the solitary survivor of the first Senate of the United States, and of the company, who broke bread with the Father of his Country on the day of his first inauguration as President, has passed off the stage within a few months. A race has risen up who knew not Joseph, but to whom his revered memory, loaded with the praises of his country and mankind, has descended as a precious legacy. To give to this memory of the greatest of heroes, and the most prudent of statesmen, its

fullest force and abiding perpetuity with coming generations, — to supply the place of that influence which flowed from personal intercourse, — to dispute with oblivion the possession of any part of this august compound of high principle, ripe wisdom, spotless patriotism, and happy fortune, is the province of literature. He must speak directly to posterity from the printed page. This impress of his mind and character must be perpetuated in the volumes of his works, for the guidance of all succeeding generations. If the task of preparing his works for publication be negligently, unskillfully, or faithlessly performed, it is not merely a wrong done to his literary character, which, however respectable it might be deemed in a common great man, is the faintest ray in Washington's crown of praise, but it tends to impair his rightful influence with posterity, and to defraud the country of a portion of its precious heritage.

For this reason, we consider Mr. Sparks as having rendered a public service greatly beyond performing, in a finished style of excellence, a highly important literary task. He has contributed to place Washington's character beyond the reach of accident, and to insure to his principles and to his example the most abiding influence on affairs. He has offered to the good and patriotic of other countries an authentic collection of his writings in an attractive form ; and thus done all that can be done to extend their rightful sway into other political societies. Not least, by thus judiciously performing his great task, he has prevented it from falling into incompetent and ill-qualified hands, and spared the country the shame and sorrow of seeing low passions, and mean prejudices, and party biases of any kind incorporated into a work which of all others should be beyond their reach.

In addition to the more substantial merits of Mr. Sparks's work, he is entitled to the highest praise for the pains taken with those subsidiary matters, on which the convenience of a book for use essentially depends. It is amply supplied with indexes. The General Index at the conclusion of the twelfth volume exceeds one hundred pages, and enables the reader at once to refer to every prominent fact and name. The work is illustrated with several fac-similes, a variety of topographical surveys, plans of the principal military operations, and several beautiful portraits. In the first volume will

be found Stuart's celebrated head of Mrs. Washington, and in the twelfth a full length portrait of her in her youth, both beautifully engraved by Cheney. The quantity of illustrative matter, original and selected, contained in the Appendixes, exceeds one thousand finely printed pages. This is exclusive of the notes distributed through the body of the work.

We have, on a former occasion, entered with sufficient minuteness into an explanation of the plan pursued by Mr. Sparks in editing this work ; and have laid before our readers ample specimens of the most interesting portions of the contents of the earlier volumes. We have also spoken at length of his editorial qualifications, of which the successive volumes of the great publication have confirmed our estimate.* In this way, we have already anticipated a considerable portion of what might properly belong to a review of the complete edition of the Writings of Washington. It may not be improper, however, as the work is now complete, to take a brief glance of the contents of the several volumes, by way of refreshing our memory, and forming an adequate idea of the whole.

Volume the First, which has recently appeared, is devoted to the biography, and contains a condensed narrative of the facts in the life, of Washington. This point is stated with precision, because in some quarters it has been spoken of, as if it were intended for a critical or philosophical discourse on the genius and character of Washington. To regard it in this light would be to take an entirely false view of it, and to bring it to a standard, to which it was never meant to be referred. But on this subject we may have a word or two more to say, in the progress of our article. The Appendix to this volume contains an article on the origin and genealogy of the family of Washington ; a minute account of his last illness and death ; the proceedings of Congress in consequence of his decease ; an anonymous composition designed as a monumental inscription ; and Washington's will.

The matter of the remaining volumes, eleven in number, is divided into five parts. The *first* Part contains official letters relating to the old French or Seven Years' War, and private letters before the Revolution. No one volume of the series is richer in new matter than the second volume, in which this first part of the work is contained. The Ap-

* See *North American Review*, Vol. XXXIX. pp. 467 et seqq.

pendix is particularly valuable in this way. It presents us details, ampler than any thing previously possessed by the public, on many interesting topics, and sufficient information on several, concerning which nothing of consequence was known before. This observation will be sufficiently substantiated, by running over the list of the sections of the Appendix. Among them are such articles as the following ;— Washington's early papers ; the death of Jumonville ; battle of the Great Meadows ; Braddock's defeat ; brief extracts from a diary during his attendance at the first Congress in Philadelphia ; extracts from Washington's diary, while residing on his estate at Mount Vernon in 1760 ; and his journal of a tour to the Ohio river, in 1770.

Part *the second* comprehends the largest division of the work, and extends to six volumes, from the third to the eighth, both inclusive. This part contains the correspondence and miscellaneous papers relating to the American Revolution. They form Washington's history of the Revolutionary war ; the great man unconsciously relating the history of the great deed ; rivalling the wisdom, long-suffering, perseverance, and fortitude of the exploits, by the only things in which it could be equalled, the discretion, pertinence, and simplicity of the multifarious communications, orders, reports, and expositions, by which the mighty movement was carried on to its triumphant result. If it be the highest praise of a poet, weaving his studied strains in contemplative ease, to have produced no line which dying he might wish to blot, how much more glorious to come out of the hurry and confusion, the toil and danger, ay, the mortal effort and agony of such a revolution, — the birth-struggle of an empire straining into existence through agony and blood, — without having from surprise, inadvertence, or passion thrown a hasty word upon paper, beneath the dignity of the man or his position. But we are betrayed beyond our present purpose, which is simply analytical. The Appendixes to these volumes also contain the most curious details. Among those best entitled to this character, is the fifth section of the appendix to the sixth volume, entitled, "Lord North's Views at different Stages of the American War." This document consists principally of a series of extracts made by Sir James Mackintosh from the letters and notes of George the Third to Lord North, throwing a new light on the disposition of that minister as to the prosecution of the war. For this very curious

document Mr. Sparks expresses his obligations to Lord Holland, by whom, with characteristic liberality, it was furnished for this work.

Part *third*, contained in the ninth volume, consists of private letters, from the time that Washington resigned his commission as Commander-in-chief of the army to that of his Inauguration as President of the United States ; — five or six most eventful years, in which the country, exhausted, feverish at once with languor and irritation, faint with the deferred hope of blessings to spring from independence, fermenting with vast and vague theories of new constitutions, settlements, and enterprises, was kept in manageable condition, and within the reach of the ordinary resources of policy, mainly by what may be called the latent influence of Washington. Though he was at this time a retired chieftain, a private citizen, — Cæsar, when he drove the last cohort of his rival from that field of Pharsalia which fixed the fortunes of the world for a thousand years, did not exercise a more sovereign influence over men and things, than that which was now exercised by Washington, without conscious purpose and without effort. His influence, unauthorized by any office, not expressed in orders, not enforced by troops, insensibly emanating, rather than visibly going forth from Mount Vernon, breathing union amidst the elements of discord, inspiring hope when all hope seemed to have turned to sadness and despair, saved the country, in that fearful interval between the peace and the Constitution. What entirely new combinations of events and influences of characters might have formed and manifested themselves, had the great Washingtonian element ceased to exist at the close of the Revolution, it is of course idle to inquire. But, supposing all other things to have remained as they actually were, it is not too much to say, that it is very doubtful, whether, without him at its head, the federal convention would have commanded enough of public confidence to be sustained in maturing its work ; or whether, supposing it matured and submitted to the people, nine States would have ratified it, but for the preëxisting conviction that a chief of the experimental government could be found, in whose pure hands its untried powers, — deemed dangerously large, — would be administered for the sole good of the country ; or whether, supposing the constitution to have been adopted, there could have

been a concentration of public opinion sufficiently powerful to carry any other candidate but Washington into the Presidency without dangerous collisions. Even as it was, the languor of the public mind, in reference to the new constitution, is strikingly illustrated by the fact, that, at the first meeting of the first Congress appointed for the 4th of March, a quorum of the House of Representatives did not convene till the 1st of April; nor then, without diligent efforts on the part of those present, by messengers and letters, to induce their tardy brethren to come in.

The *fourth* Part, which occupies the tenth and eleventh volumes of the work, is devoted to letters official and private from the beginning of the Presidency to the end of the life of Washington. The mere annunciation of the subject-matter of this division of the work is for the present sufficient. The Appendixes to these volumes are full of the most curious details of the political history of the times, both public and what is commonly called secret. Among the topics which form the subject of these notices are Washington's visit to the Eastern States; the dissensions in the cabinet, and the differences between Jefferson and Hamilton; the appointment of an Envoy Extraordinary to the court of Great Britain; opinions of the cabinet, advising Mr. Monroe's recall from France; papers relating to the imprisonment of Lafayette at Olmutz; remarks of Washington on Monroe's "View of the Conduct of the Executive of the United States," copied from manuscript notes; and several papers relative to the appointment of officers in the army, in 1798. We name these as a specimen only of the curious illustrative documents, appended to the tenth and eleventh volumes.

The *fifth* and last division of the work is contained in the twelfth volume, and consists of speeches and messages to Congress, proclamations, and addresses. The Appendix to this volume contains a specimen, at considerable length, of Washington's agricultural and business correspondence; a highly interesting discussion of the question of the authorship of the Farewell Address; an essay of great moment on the religious opinions and habits of Washington; and several lists, collected and digested with great care, of public functionaries during his career. The whole work concludes with ample Indexes.

It is due to the important character of this publication, that

some literary notice of the manner in which it has been prepared should be laid before our readers. In our article on the second and third volumes of the work, we stated the most important particulars relative to the plan on which it was projected, and the mode of executing it, as derived from the introduction to the first and second Parts. A few particulars in addition, are given in the preface to the twelfth volume. The great mass of papers which accumulated in Washington's hands, during his long and varied public career, having been carefully preserved by him at Mount Vernon, were at his decease bequeathed with that estate to his nephew Bushrod Washington, who was for more than thirty years one of the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. While in the hands of Judge Washington, and shortly after the decease of his revered relative, they were consulted by Chief Justice Marshall, in the preparation of his "Life of Washington." Ten years ago they were confided by Judge Washington to Mr. Sparks, for the purpose of being used in preparing the work, which he has now so successfully brought to a close. The original papers, including Washington's own letters, and those received by him, and amounting to more than two hundred folio volumes, were a few years since purchased by Congress of Mr. George C. Washington, to whom they had been bequeathed by his uncle, the Judge, and are deposited in the archives of the Department of State.

It will be readily understood that the present publication, although extending to twelve volumes, contains but a portion of what is embraced in the original papers. Mr. Sparks at one time entertained the idea of publishing in a separate work the entire collection. This eventually no doubt will be done ; but it will be an undertaking too expensive for any but the public resources. Mr. Sparks candidly admits the difficulty of the task of selection, but states it to have been made with care and deliberation, regardless of the time, expense, and labor of examination requisite for the task.

The materials for the notes and illustrations contained in the Appendixes, have been derived from various sources at home and abroad, mostly from unpublished manuscripts, not seldom from sources opened by the good fortune and diligence of Mr. Sparks, and to which it is by no means certain that any future inquirer will have equal access. They pos-

sess the strongest claim to be considered as authentic, and as new contributions to history.

Mr. Sparks acknowledges himself under very great obligations to General Lafayette for the papers and information directly furnished by him, and his services in facilitating the researches made by Mr. Sparks in the public archives of Paris. Among the materials thus placed at his disposal, were numerous papers relative to the American Revolution, and a copy of the entire correspondence of the General with the French government. We are able to vouch, from personal inspection, for the importance of the contributions thus made toward the preparation of this great national work.

The curious and interesting paper, already alluded to, as containing extracts from the correspondence between George the Third and Lord North, was, as we have already stated, kindly communicated by Lord Holland to Mr. Sparks, and is regarded by him, perhaps with justice, "as the most remarkable document connected with the history of the Revolution." This document proves, that from the year 1777, Lord North was decidedly opposed to the prosecution of the war, and for that reason earnestly desirous of retiring from the ministry. He was retained in office by the direct appeals and the urgent entreaties of the king. It is perhaps a solitary instance, in a matter of such moment, that, under a constitutional government, a prince of moderate capacity, of no military experience, and without personal popularity, should, by the simple force of obstinacy, have kept the country at war, against the judgment of his constitutional advisers, for five long years; and equally so, that a minister should be kept in the position of waging a war, "of the success of which he despaired, and the principles of which he in his heart disapproved," from mere "indolent weakness and sense of honor." The document in question throws an unexpected light on a point in our revolutionary history of some curiosity. It will be recollected, that some exception was taken to the mode in which, in the Declaration of Independence, the king is held personally responsible for the oppressive measures, which brought on the war, which measures were necessarily adopted in pursuance of acts of Parliament. Although this coloring was given to the matter, in conformity with the view taken by Mr. Jefferson, and those who thought with him, of the peculiar relation of the colonies to the crown, yet this

correspondence of King George the Third with Lord North proves, that he was with justice, and not merely in theory, to be regarded as personally responsible for the war.

As we do not know, that we shall have an opportunity of reverting to this topic, we present the reader with the following interesting extract of a letter from the King to Lord North, of the month of June, 1779 ;

“ No man in my dominions desires *solid* peace more than I do. But no inclination to get out of the present difficulties, which certainly keep my mind very far from a state of ease, *can incline me to enter into the destruction of the empire.* Lord North FREQUENTLY says, that the advantages to be gained by this contest can never counterbalance the *expense.* I own that in any war, be it ever so successful, if persons will sit down and weigh the *expense*, they will find, as in the last, that it has impoverished the nation enriched [?] ; * but this is only weighing such events in the scale of a tradesman behind his counter. It is necessary for those whom Providence has placed in my station, to weigh whether expenses, though very great, are not sometimes necessary to prevent what would be more ruinous than any loss of money. The present contest with America I cannot help seeing as the most serious, in which this country was ever engaged. It contains such a train of consequences as must be examined to feel its real weight. Whether the laying a tax was deserving all the evils, that have arisen from it, I suppose no man could allege, without being thought more fit for Bedlam than a seat in the Senate ; but, step by step, the demands of America have risen. Independence is their object, which every man, not willing to sacrifice every object to a *momentary and inglorious* peace, must concur *with me* in thinking this country *can never submit to.* Should America succeed in that, the West Indies must follow, not in independence, but in dependence on America. Ireland would soon follow, and this island reduce itself to a poor island indeed.” — Vol. vi. p. 535.

Similar sentiments run through all the extracts, and at the close is the following remark of Sir James Mackintosh ;—
“ 1783, *after the peace.* His language proves that his feelings about America were not altered, though circumstances compelled him to change his conduct.”

* We suppose the meaning is, “ has impoverished even the successful party in the contest.” Were it not the King himself, that speaks, we should say, that “ *impoverished* the state *enriched* ” is at best excusable homicide of his Majesty’s English.

Mr. Sparks, after making his acknowledgments to Lord Holland for the communication of the above highly interesting paper, expresses his thanks to Mr. Justice Story for the lively interest manifested in the work, and the benefit derived from his suggestions and advice.

“To Mr. Samuel A. Eliot, also,” (he adds,) “I would here make a public acknowledgment of the substantial and valuable aid he has, in various ways, lent to my undertaking, the successful issue of which has been promoted in no small degree by his friendly offices and personal exertions.” — Vol. 1. p. xii.

In reference to the *Life of Washington*, which fills the first volume, Mr. Sparks observes, that he has endeavoured to follow closely the order of time, adopting the plan of a personal narrative, and introducing collateral events no farther, than was absolutely necessary to give completeness to this design. Still the public theatre, on which so much of the life of Washington was passed, makes it necessary that his biography should assume in some degree the form of a history of the times in which he lived. Anecdotes have been interwoven by Mr. Sparks, and such incidents of a private and personal nature as are known; but it must be confessed, that these are more rare than could be desired.

“I have seen,” he remarks, “many particulars of this description which I knew to be not true, and others which I did not believe. These have been avoided; nor have I stated any fact, for which I was not convinced there was credible authority. If this forbearance has been practised at the expense of the reader’s entertainment, he must submit to the sacrifice as due to truth and the dignity of the subject.” — p. xiii.

It is to be regretted, that pains were not taken, a generation or more ago, to record the still surviving recollections of Washington, particularly of his early life, before the authentic had become inextricably mingled with the apocryphal and the fabulous. Such anecdotes still unquestionably exist in the neighbourhood of Fredericksburg, and there are collections of them which aspire to credibility, but we fear without certain warrant.* Mr. Sparks has unquestionably pursued a

* We except from this remark, a few interesting traditions which have been collected by Mr. Paulding, in his popular “*Life of Washington*,” which appear to be derived from authentic sources, and contain nothing incredible.

judicious course, in admitting nothing into his narrative which is not sufficiently vouched ; but it would well reward the pains which might be requisite, on the part of some one possessing the needful convenience of locality, to gather from living sources, from recent tradition, and from what family memorials exist, all such anecdotes and reminiscences as would throw light on the formation of the character of Washington, or furnish domestic illustrations of its peculiarities.

It is not too late to accomplish this pious work with excellent effect. Almost all that we know of the personal history of Milton and Shakspeare, to say nothing of Dante and Petrarch, and most of the heroes of Plutarch, was gathered up after a greater lapse of time, (in the last named case far greater,) than has yet passed since the death of Washington. It would be worth all the labor and research, which such a work might require, to substantiate, if it is capable of being substantiated, the single anecdote of the care taken by the father of Washington to inculcate upon his son the obligation of veracity.

Justice to this great undertaking requires, that the plan and purposes of Mr. Sparks, in collecting the writings and composing the life of Washington, should be apprehended. With respect to the former, it was his design, as has already appeared, to make such a selection from the great mass, as would comprehend all that was historically important, eminently characteristic, or for any other reason highly interesting. In preparing the Life, which is to be carefully considered in connexion with the Works, it was plainly Mr. Sparks's intention to sketch the principal incidents in the history of Washington as a man, a commander, and a statesman ; and to present with them a full developement of his principles of action, and his opinions on all the important questions which presented themselves in his long career, as constituting the aggregate of his character. This has been done in the narrative form as the most usual, the most natural, and the best adapted to the mass of readers. To have engaged at great length in general reflections, in political discussions, or speculations on remote consequences, would have been to change the character, not less than to transcend the necessary limits, of the work. It was the purpose of Mr. Sparks to narrate, and not to discuss, the character of Washington ; to write an account of his life, and not an essay upon it. Among other

reasons which might be assigned, were it necessary (which it is not) that any should be assigned, why an author should select that mode of treating a subject which approves itself to his own judgment, we might say, that the plan pursued by Mr. Sparks is the only one, on which he could maintain a philosophical neutrality as to many constitutional controversies. It was highly desirable, that this first authentic edition of the literary remains of the Father of his Country should go forth without prejudice. This could hardly have been the case, had they been accompanied with a biographical introduction of a different character. We must not be understood as being insensible to the fact, that the character of Washington, and its connexion with the destinies of the country, form one of the noblest themes for a philosophical discussion. No power of analysis is too great to master it, no eloquence too lofty to set it forth. As the highest merely human impersonation of all the patriotic virtues, it is a topic destined of course to become more and more important with each succeeding age, and as successive intellects shall have developed its magnitude. Mr. Sparks has proposed to himself in this publication, to draw up the record, and collect the materials, by the aid of which this great task must be performed ; and the service, which he has thus rendered to the cause of constitutional liberty, is of vast importance.

In practical matters, men are mainly taught by example. It is cheap wisdom to proclaim to the world, that ambition ought not to corrupt the heart of the successful chieftain, and that having served, or even saved, the country furnishes no title to enslave it. So long as the universal experience of mankind runs to the contrary, and no one capable of abusing power is found to miss the opportunity, these maxims pass for a kind of ascetic morality, which hypocrites preach and simpletons believe. Each new tyrant and usurper finds his conduct justified, not merely by the example of his predecessors, but by a kind of common understanding among men, that power, as of course, is to be abused. The more splendid the career, and the more dazzling the success, of a conqueror, and the more complete his triumph over the liberties of other countries and his own, the more diffusive and abiding the corruption of his example. Alexander, and Cæsar, and Napoleon have done more to pervert public opinion, and debauch the judgment of the young, than can be undone by

all mere inculcations of principle. The success of the party of Cæsar, after he himself was struck down, drove Brutus at once to the conclusion, that Virtue was but a name ; and who can undertake to say, how much energy of character has been misdirected, how much mad ambition has been awakened, how many wars waged, and how much blood shed, in the lapse of ages, in consequence of setting up before the world the spectacle of an empire coextensive with the universe, and perpetuated through ages, which was founded on the criminal ambition of one man. When the books fail to furnish an effectual counterpoise to this bad influence, and men are ready, like Brutus, in despair to fly to the conclusion, that there is no sphere of activity for Goodness in the province of civil government ; that this world belongs of necessity to a political anti-christ ; a character like Washington arises, like the sun of righteousness, with healing in its wings. Virtue, sneered at and mocked, takes courage. Disinterested labor for the good of others emerges from the humble paths of parochial charity. The intelligence of the mass of mankind, long derided as visionary, and set at nought as impracticable, feels itself vindicated and fortified. The world for a while looks on in incredulous wonder. Distrustful expectation watches the steps of the hero. His gracious words are heard with incredulity ; his generous acts surveyed with doubt. The time is sorrowfully foreboded, when the delusion will be over, the mask be dropped, and the meagre, people-loving Consul, will expand into the sleek and purple Dictator. But, if he persevere in the path of patriotism and of duty ; if he march from victory to victory with unelated brow, and cling to the cause in disaster as well as triumph ; if he consecrate his sword to the protection of the law ; and, when the warfare is ended, if he send his army to their homes and abdicate the power which their devotion confers on him, then, indeed, it is cold praise to say he has served, or even saved, his country. He has served, and, humanly speaking, has saved his race. He has “given ardor to virtue and confidence to truth.” He has led forth patriotism from a cell, and placed her on a throne. He has robbed the tyrant of his plea, and shown that it is not necessary that mankind should be enslaved ; and from that time forward, till the voice of history is struck dumb, wheresoever on the face of the globe an effort is made to establish constitutional government, there

his example is present to furnish an ever-ready answer to the ever-ready objection, that, though the theory is good, it is impossible to put it to practice.

It is not too early to perceive the salutary influence of the example of Washington, both in the United States and elsewhere. It is impossible for any President, however popular and however ambitious, to be a candidate for election a third time. There has unquestionably been one instance where the authority of his example has saved the country from this result. It was Washington's ardent wish and purpose to retire after the first term, and thus to give effect to the provision of the Constitution, founded, as it was, in the deepest practical wisdom and prophetic foresight. It would be matter of regret, that he yielded to the importunity of his friends, had not his reëlection been necessary to save us from being drawn into the vortex of the French Revolution. Had he retired after the first four years, he might have created the same necessity of a single term of service, and thus supplied a remedy for one of the great practical defects of our system, — that the incumbent is tempted to employ the patronage of his office the first term, to promote his election to a second. Abroad the example of Washington has already imposed checks upon those, whom the ever-changing, unstable incidents of their crude revolutions is bringing to the head of affairs. We are sometimes perhaps impatient, when a man like Bolivar, for instance, allows himself to be addressed by the title of the "second Washington"; but it is well for his country and the world, that he is willing to wear it. There is virtue in the name. It imposes restraint. The second Washington places himself under obligations not to fall too monstrously and glaringly below the standard of the first. He carries about with him a monitor which rebukes ambition, and enjoins all the duties of patriotic self-denial. It is not easy to overrate the importance of such an influence, at a period when so many experiments of constitutional government are making in the world. It becomes a kind of secular dispensation, designed to exercise not merely its immediate agency, but a continuous, progressive power over human affairs; constraining all men, who want courage wholly to defy and set at nought the awakened opinion in favor of right and liberty, to reduce themselves to some decent conformity with the great exemplar.

Perhaps there never lived a man in respect to whom it was so unimportant from what ancestry he sprung ; but it is a matter of curiosity to inquire to whom belongs the honor of his descent. When Henry the Eighth suppressed the religious houses and bestowed their endowments on his favorites, he granted, in 1538, to Lawrence Washington, gentleman, of Northampton, "the manor of Sulgrave, parcel of the dissolved priory of St. Andrew, with all the lands in Sulgrave and Woodford, and certain lands in Stotesbury and Colton, near Northampton, late belonging to the said priory, with all the lands in Sulgrave late belonging to the dissolved priories of canons Ashley and Catesby." The consideration of this grant is not stated. From this Lawrence Washington, who died seized of the manor of Sulgrave in 1583-4, George Washington is lineally descended. Farther back the family is not lineally traceable ; but the name of Washington, under a varying orthography, is found in several parts of England at different periods, from the close of the twelfth century. From the authorities collected by Mr. Sparks, with great diligence and the best opportunities of observation, at the Herald's college in London, and in the county histories of England, it appears that Hertburn was the original name of the Washington family, and that the name of Washington was assumed by William de Hertburn, between the years 1261 and 1274, from the parish of that name in the county of Durham, which belonged to him.

Among the descendants of Lawrence Washington of Sulgrave, Henry Washington was distinguished for his brave and resolute defence of Worcester in the civil wars. A letter written by him to General Fairfax, who summoned him to surrender to the army of the Parliament on the 16th May, 1646, is preserved, which shows a spirit not unworthy of the name.

"It is acknowledged by your books, and by report out of your own quarters, that the king is in some of your armies. That granted, it may be easy for you to procure his Majesty's commands for the disposal of this garrison. Till then, I shall make good the trust reposed in me. As for conditions, if I shall be necessitated, I shall make the best I can. The worst I know and fear not ; if I had, the profession of a soldier had not been begun nor so long continued by your Excellency's humble servant." — Vol. I. p. 544.

It is quite noticeable, that in this letter, not merely the firmness and spirit, but the mode of contemplating and treating the subject, and even the turn of the phrase, bear a striking resemblance to those of our Washington.

In the civil line, Joseph Washington of the same family, was a lawyer of eminence. He was the compiler of the first volume of "Modern Reports"; the author of "Observations on the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Kings of England," published in 1689; of an "Abridgment of the Statutes to 1687," and of a "Translation of Lucian." Perhaps it may be deemed a higher praise, that he was the friend of Lord Somers, and the translator of Milton's "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano," in reply to Salmasius.

In the parish church at Sulgrave, in the year 1793, was still to be seen a stone slab, on which was a brass plate with this inscription in the old English character. "Here lyeth buried the bodys of Lawrence Washington, Gent. and Anne his wyf, by whom he had issue four sons and seven daughters; which Lawrence dyed y^e —th day of —, 15—, and Anne deceased 6th day of October, An. Dom. 1564." On the same stone is a shield much defaced, and effigies in brass of the four sons and seven daughters. Over the four sons is a figure larger than the rest, which is supposed to be the father's effigy. There was formerly one over the seven daughters, but this is gone. It may be presumed from the blanks in the above inscription, that it was prepared by Lawrence Washington during his life. He died on the 19th of February, 1584, and the manor of Sulgrave descended to his eldest son, Robert. This son was twice married, and had ten sons and six daughters. The oldest of the sons, Lawrence, had seven sons and seven daughters. The oldest of these sons was Sir William Washington of Packington. He married the half-sister of George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, and is supposed to have been the father of Sir Henry Washington, commemorated above. The second and fourth of these seven sons, were John and Lawrence Washington, who emigrated to Virginia about the year 1657. They were the great grandsons of Lawrence Washington of Sulgrave, and John was the great grandfather of GEORGE WASHINGTON.

The emigrations of the family were not limited to America. By the genealogical tables appended to the first volume

it appears, that some of the name had emigrated to Holland. Among the letters of Washington contained in this collection, is one of the 20th of January, 1799, in reply to a letter from James Washington, a young German officer, who had written to his illustrious namesake in America, claiming kindred, as far as can be inferred from the answer, and seeking employment in the army of the United States. A few years ago, the diplomatic representative of the king of Bavaria at the Court of the Netherlands, was a gentleman of the same name, who considered himself as of the family of the American Washington.

John and Lawrence Washington, second and fourth sons of Lawrence, who was the grandson of Washington of Sulgrave, emigrated, as has been observed, to Virginia about 1657, and settled at Bridge's Creek on the Potomac river, in the county of Westmoreland. John had been a student at Oxford; Lawrence had resided on an estate at South Cave, in Yorkshire, which gave rise to an erroneous tradition among his descendants, that their ancestor came from the North of England. Chief Justice Marshall speaks of the emigration as proceeding from that quarter. The two brothers purchased lands in Virginia, and became successful planters. Not long after his arrival in this country, John Washington was employed with the rank of Colonel in the wars with the Indians in Maryland. The parish in which he lived was called by his name. He married Anne Pope, and had two sons, Lawrence and John, and one daughter. The oldest son, Lawrence, married Mildred Warner of Gloucester County, and had three children, John, Augustine, and Mildred.

Augustine Washington, the second son, was twice married. His first wife was Jane Butler, by whom he had three sons, Butler, Lawrence, Augustine, and a daughter Jane. Butler and Jane died in infancy or childhood. His second wife was *Mary Ball*, to whom he was married on the 6th March, 1630; GEORGE was the oldest of six children of this marriage; the other children were Betty, Samuel, John Augustine, Charles, and Mildred. George Washington was born on the 22d of February, 1732, in Westmoreland County, Virginia, a great grandson of the first emigrant to America, and sixth in descent from Washington of Sulgrave. When Henry the Eighth granted this portion of the spoils of the

church to the worshipful mayor of Northampton, it was probably the least of his calculations, that he was building up a family, from which would spring the leader of a revolution, destined to despoil the crown of England of a mighty empire on that continent, whose existence was then but barely known in Great Britain.

The father of Washington, after the birth of George, removed from Westmoreland to Stafford County, to an estate on the eastern bank of the Rappahannoc river opposite Fredericksburg, where he died at the age of forty-nine, leaving to be divided among his children a respectable landed property, chiefly acquired by his own industry and enterprise as a planter.

The oldest son, Lawrence, inherited the estate afterwards known as Mount Vernon. The lands and mansion, where the father was living at the time of his death, were bequeathed to George. Each of the other children received a separate plantation; and, in full reliance on the prudence of their mother, it was directed in his will, that the entire income of the estate should be at her disposal till they should respectively come of age. This important trust, with that of the entire education and bringing up of her children, was discharged by this excellent lady with equal fidelity and success. She had the satisfaction of beholding the advancement of all her family in life, and of living to see her oldest son, after gloriously passing through two wars, raised to the highest place in the gift and in the affections of his countrymen.

The means of public education in Virginia, at the time that Washington was of age to receive it, were not abundant; but the traditions of his family must have been strongly favorable to that kind and degree of culture, which belong to the man of property and the magistrate. His great grandfather had been a student at Oxford, and as the family had probably risen rather than sunk in fortune since the emigration, and never more so than in the generation preceding Washington, he must have imbibed with his first training the taste for intellectual improvement which becomes a country gentleman. He was sent, however, to no higher institution than a common school, where instruction was confined to the English language, and to the elements of exact science. No particular accounts are preserved of his progress; but *the child is father of the man*. We know what Washington must have

been even at school. Tradition reports him inquisitive, docile, and diligent, early evincing a taste for military manœuvres ; with a passion for athletic exercises and field sports which never deserted him, and possessing an ascendancy over his fellow pupils, in virtue of the early manhood of his deportment, and the firmness of his boyish probity. Authentic memorials of these early days remain. His school-books have been preserved from the time he was thirteen years old. They represent him as entering at that age on the study of geometry. But there is one of a still earlier date, strongly characteristic of his cast of mind. It contains what he calls *forms of writings*, such as notes of hand, bills of exchange, receipts, bonds, indentures, bills of sale, land-warrants, leases, deeds, and wills, written out with care, the prominent words in large and round characters, in imitation of a clerk's hand. This would have been deemed a precocious developement of taste for the hereditary calling, in the son of some exceedingly knavish scrivener ; but for the offspring, not yet thirteen years of age, of a prosperous Virginia gentleman, a lad, moreover, fond of military exercises and field sports, this early aptitude for rigid precision of business forms a point of character, by which the Washington of after life was eminently distinguished.

These forms are followed, in the juvenile compend alluded to, by selections in rhyme, recommended more by the sentiments they contain, and the religious tone that pervades them, than by their poetical merit. Washington had no poetry in his nature, in the common acceptance of the term. His intellectual and moral qualities were too severely chastened, and brought into a system too strictly and harmoniously proportioned and trained for practical life, to admit those effusions of feeling, which are poured out from the hearts of many young men, possessing in their minds and characters far less of every element of poetry than Washington. Such poetry in early life may be the mark either of a defective or of an exquisite organization. In most cases it is mere imitation and habit. Forward lads lisp in numbers, because they are most familiar with this form of composition. They catch it from the poetical extracts which are declaimed from their school-books ; there is a charm in mere rhythm for the youthful ear ; and there is a little artifice in the measure of verses and the echo of rhymes, within the youthful grasp, and flattering to

the boyish vanity of achievement. It was in keeping with the character of Washington, even as a boy, to take that sober view of the vanity of mere jingle, which leads all but those who have a spark of the true inspiration, to forswear the "gentle science," as soon as they come of age.

The most curious portion of the contents of the school-book alluded to, is a system of practical maxims for the government of conduct, drawn from miscellaneous sources, (as Mr. Sparks supposes, but as we should rather think, transcribed from some code of good manners or treatise of deportment, which may have been placed by a careful parent in his hands,) and arranged under the head of *Rules of Behavior in Company and Conversation*.

We have already alluded to them in a former volume of our Journal. They unquestionably contain many of the elements of the future Washington. They present him in the interesting light of the architect of his own character ; for, though it may be supposed from their tone and import, that they were transcribed into his book of Miscellanies by the direction or advice of a person older than himself, yet the manifest conformity of his own conduct with their spirit proves, that he adopted them as imperative rules of behaviour. On this subject Mr. Sparks makes the following remarks ;

" In studying the character of Washington it is obvious, that this code of rules had an influence upon his whole life. His temperament was ardent, his passions strong, and, amidst the multiplied scenes of temptation and excitement through which he passed, it was his constant effort and ultimate triumph to check the one and subdue the other. His intercourse with men, public and private, in every walk and station, was marked with a consistency, a fitness to occasions, a dignity, decorum, condescension, and mildness, a respect for the claims of others, and a delicate perception of the nicer shades of civility, which were not more the dictates of his native good sense and incomparable judgment, than the fruits of a long and unwearied discipline."—Vol. I. p. 7.

Washington continued at school till nearly fifteen years of age. The last two years were devoted principally to the study of geometry and trigonometry, and their application to surveying. In this he became a proficient. His books, still in existence, contain the plans and calculations of his surveys of the fields and plantations near the school-house. Of some

of these interesting memorials, Mr. Sparks has presented his readers with a fac-simile, containing a specimen of his hand-writing at the age of sixteen, and of his mode of delineating the diagrams and entering the calculations of his surveys. He was acquainted with the use of logarithms, and the entries in his books are made with great neatness and precision. The habits thus early commenced were kept up during his life. His business papers, day-books, ledgers, and letter-books, in which, before the Revolution, no one wrote but himself, exhibit specimens of the same care and exactness. He appears to have taken great satisfaction in the construction of diagrams and tables. His agricultural operations were subjected to this kind of methodical statement ; and the facts of leading importance to him, in his various military and civil stations, were reduced as far as practicable to a tabular form.

His education appears to have been confined to the branches above intimated. It was nowhere the practice of the elementary schools a hundred years ago, to introduce children of tender years to the various branches of abstract science, elegant literature, and what is called useful knowledge, which are now taught with equal liberality and advantage ; and there is reason to think that the advantages possessed by Washington were rather less than might have been enjoyed at that period at the schools in large towns. Mr. Sparks thinks that he received no systematic instruction, even in the grammar of the English language ; nor did he at any period of his life apply himself to the study of the ancient tongues. After the French officers arrived in the country, in the Revolutionary war, and particularly while the army of the Count Rochambeau was acting in coopération with his own, he paid some attention to the French language ; but at no time could he write it or converse in it, nor did he in fact trust himself to translate any paper.

Before he left school, Washington passed through one of the crises of his life, important alike to himself and his country. His elder brother Lawrence, a child of the former marriage, commanded a company which had been present at the capture of Porto Bello and the disastrous siege of Carthagera, pathetically commemorated by Thomson. He had acquired the esteem and confidence of General Wentworth and Admiral Vernon, the commanders of the expedition. In honor of the latter, Captain Lawrence Washington gave the

name of Mount Vernon to the estate, which he had inherited from his father, and which on his decease he bequeathed to George. Having observed the military turn of his brother, and looking upon the British navy as holding forth the best prospect of advancement, he obtained a midshipman's warrant for George in the year 1746, when he was fourteen years old. This step was taken with his acquiescence, if not at his request, and he prepared with a buoyant spirit to depart for his destination.

He was thus on the point of quitting the soil of his native country, at the most susceptible period of life. He was about to enter a path of duty and of advancement, in which, if he had escaped the hazards and gained the prizes of his career, he could scarcely have failed to be carried to distant scenes,—to be employed in foreign expeditions, in remote seas, perhaps in another hemisphere. He would certainly have failed of the opportunity of preparing himself, in the camp and the field, in the approaching war, to command the armies of the Revolution. Not improbably he would have sunk under the pestilential climate of the West Indies and the Spanish Main. Such seemed however almost inevitably his career. His older brother approves and advises, he himself probably desires it, and the warrant is obtained. But resistance arose in the yearnings of a mother's heart. Some fragments of correspondence relative to this interesting event have been preserved. The following is an extract from a letter written to Lawrence Washington by his father-in-law, William Fairfax, dated the 10th of September, 1746.

“George has been with us, and says he will be steady, and thankfully follow your advice as his best friend. I gave him his mother's letter to deliver, with a caution not to show his. I have spoken to Dr. Spencer, who I find is often at the widow's [Mrs. Washington's], and has some influence, to persuade her to think better of your advice, in putting George to sea with good recommendations.”—Vol. II. pp. 415, 416.

The following extract on the same subject was written by Mr. Robert Jackson to Lawrence Washington, and dated at Fredericksburg, the 18th of October, 1746.

“I am afraid Mrs. Washington will not keep up to her first resolution. She seems to intimate a dislike to George's going to sea, and says several persons have told her it was a bad scheme. She offers several trifling objections, such as fond,

unthinking mothers habitually suggest ; and I find that one word against his going has more weight than ten for it. Colonel Fairfax seems desirous he should go, and wished me to acquaint you with Mrs. Washington's sentiments. I intend shortly to take an opportunity to talk with her, and will let you know the result." — Vol. II. p. 416.

Nothing, however, could overcome the repugnance of his widowed mother. The entire destinies of Washington and of America, as connected with each other, hung suspended on the decision of that "fond, unthinking mother" ; and out of that fondness and thoughtlessness sprang a wisdom and counsel, to which, in all human appearance, America is indebted for her Washington.

After leaving school, for reasons not particularly stated, he went to reside with his brother Lawrence at Mount Vernon. The winter was devoted to his favorite study of the mathematics, and to practice in surveying. Here he formed or cultivated the acquaintance of Lord Fairfax and other members of the Fairfax family. With this family his brother Lawrence was connected by marriage. They possessed great landed estates, and were persons of intelligence, education, and influence. Lord Fairfax was educated at Oxford, and was one of the writers in the *Spectator*. At an advanced period of life, he established himself in the valley of the Shenandoah, and died at the age of ninety-two, near the close of the Revolution. William Fairfax, his distant relative, was a native of England. In early life he served in the army in Spain, and in the East and the West Indies. He was governor of New Providence and the Bahamas, and was thence transferred to some office in New England. While there, he was requested by Lord Fairfax to take the agency of his affairs in Virginia. To his acquaintance with the members of this family, Washington was, in the outset of life, mainly indebted for the opportunity of performing those acts, which laid the foundation of his subsequent success, advancement, and fortune.

Lord Fairfax possessed an immense landed estate between the Potomac and Rappahannoc rivers, extending back to, and beyond, the Alleghany Mountains. These lands had never been surveyed. Precisely at this period the attention of men of adventure had begun to stretch away beyond the Blue Ridge ; a region now filled with a dense population, with all

the works of human labor, and all the bounties of a productive soil ; then shaded by the native forest, infested with savages, and claimed as the dominion of France. That portion of the country which lay nearest the settlements had been granted, for the most part probably to large proprietors in extensive tracts, which had never been surveyed. Settlers were forcing their way up the streams, selecting the fertile places, and occupying the lands without title. It became a very important object with the proprietors, in the absence of any system of public surveys like that which now prevails, to have their estates accurately divided into lots and measured. Lord Fairfax had formed so favorable an opinion of the general capacity of young Washington, and his fitness for this employment, that he confided to him the important trust of surveying his estates. He set off on his first expedition in March, just a month from the day he was sixteen years old, accompanied by George, the son of William Fairfax.

This may be considered as another critical moment in the career of Washington. At a period of life when, in a more thickly settled country, the intelligent youth is occupied with academic studies in schools and colleges, Washington was stretching the chain through the valleys of the Blue Ridge and Alleghany Mountains ; passing days and weeks in the wilderness, beneath the shadow of primitive forests ; listening to the voice of the waterfall, reposing from the labors of the day on a bearskin, with his feet to the blazing logs of a camp fire ; and sometimes startled from the deep slumbers of hard-working youth, by the alarm of the Indian war-whoop. This was the gymnastic school in which Washington was brought up. The training corresponded to the vocation, *hæ tibi erunt artes*. Here the quick glance was formed, destined afterwards to range across the field of battle, through clouds of smoke and rows of bayonets. This was the school in which his senses, preserved from the taste for the detestable indulgences miscalled pleasures, in which the flower of adolescence so often droops away, were early braced to the sinewy manhood which becomes the "Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye."

A journal of his first surveying expedition is still preserved. It is filled with details, which, slight as they are in themselves, are, from such a source, of high interest. The following letter sets him before us in all the truth of real life.

The very fact of the preservation in his journal of the rough draft of such a letter, written at the age of sixteen, and away from home, is characteristic. It was probably done, not by way of any possible use of future verification, but in order to correction, and for the sake of transcribing a fair copy.

“Dear Richard ; The receipt of your kind favor of the 2d instant afforded me unspeakable pleasure, as it convinces me that I am still in the memory of so worthy a friend, — a friendship I shall ever be proud of increasing. Yours gave me the more pleasure, as I received it among barbarians and an uncouth set of people. Since you received my letter of October last, I have not slept above three or four nights in a bed ; but, after walking a good deal all the day, I have lain down before the fire on a little hay, straw, fodder, or a bearskin, whichever was to be had, with man, wife, and children, like dogs and cats ; and happy is he, who gets the berth nearest the fire. Nothing would make it pass off tolerably but a good reward. A doubloon is my constant gain every day, that the weather will permit of my going out, and sometimes six pistoles. The coldness of the weather will not allow of my making a long stay, as the lodging is rather too cold for the time of year. I have never had my clothes off, but have lain and slept in them, except the few nights I have been in Frederictown.” — Vol. II. p. 419.

Other letters are preserved, which show that the heart of the youthful Washington was the prey of other cares, than those incident to his laborious professional excursions in the mountains. The following is given by Mr. Sparks as a specimen of this portion of the correspondence.

“Dear Friend Robin ; As it is the greatest mark of friendship and esteem, which absent friends can show each other, to write and often communicate their thoughts, I shall endeavour from time to time, and at all times, to acquaint you with my situation and employments in life, and I could wish you would take half the pains to send me a letter by any opportunity, as you may be well assured of its meeting with a very welcome reception.

“My place of residence at present is at his Lordship's [Lord Fairfax's], where I might, were my heart disengaged, pass my time very pleasantly, as there is a very agreeable young lady in the same house, Colonel George Fairfax's wife's sister. But that only adds fuel to the fire, as being often and unavoidably in company with her revives my former passion for your Lowland beauty ; whereas, were I to live more retired from young women, I might in some measure alleviate my sorrow, by bury-

ing that chaste and troublesome passion in oblivion ; and I am very well assured, that this will be the only antidote or remedy." — Vol. II. pp. 419, 420.

The occupation of a surveyor was pursued by Washington for about three years. He acquitted himself to the entire satisfaction of his employers in the trusts committed to him. We have already seen that his labors were liberally compensated ; and, in the opportunity which he possessed of learning the position of valuable lands, no doubt he had it in his power still further to promote his interest. He became acquainted with a portion of the country then little known, but which was shortly to become the theatre of his first military service. He was brought into close contact with a class of men whom he was shortly to meet in another character, and had some intercourse with the natives of the forest. He soon received a commission as a public surveyor, which gave authority to his surveys, and enabled him to enter them in the county offices. This circumstance, conjoined with a character for accuracy, diligence, and probity, secured him all the employment which he desired, in this lucrative pursuit. On the whole, it was scarcely possible that he could have passed the three years of his life, from the age of sixteen, more advantageously, either with reference to his private interest or his preparation for the great work to which Providence had called him.

In these occupations he had made himself so favorably known, that, on the division of the province into several military districts, which took place at this period in consequence of the alarms of French and Indian hostilities, he was appointed in one of them to the place of Adjutant-general, with the rank of Major. It was his duty in this capacity to assemble and exercise the militia, to inspect their arms, and enforce all the requisitions of the militia law, with the responsibility of preparing the troops under his command for actual service in the war which was supposed to be impending. It was an office at once of trust and emolument, the pay being one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. This appointment gave a spring to the military tastes of Washington. He devoted himself to the study of tactics, and to the manual exercise, with the assistance of his brother, and other officers who had served in the late war. He read the principal authors on the military art, and joined practice to theory,

as far as the circumstances of his limited command would admit.

Washington had hardly engaged in this service, when he was called to another, which, though it lay within the circle of his domestic duties, was in some respects eminently critical. His elder brother, Lawrence, was naturally of a slender constitution of body, and was now suffering under alarming symptoms of disease at the lungs. A voyage to Barbadoes was prescribed by the physician, and George was selected as the companion and friend. They sailed to the West Indies in the month of September, 1751, and arrived at Barbadoes after a voyage of five weeks. This is the only voyage ever undertaken by Washington. His brother's health receiving no permanent improvement, he determined, after passing the winter in Barbadoes, to cross to Bermuda in the spring; and in the mean time George was sent back to Virginia, to accompany Mrs. Lawrence to the latter island. He accordingly reëmbarked for Virginia, and, after a most tempestuous voyage, arrived in the Potomac, having been absent more than four months. Some fragments of the journal kept by him during his absence have been preserved, and they afford proof that nothing worthy of his observation, by land or by water, escaped his notice.

While at Barbadoes he was attacked with the small-pox. At the present day it is scarcely possible to realize the terrors which this loathsome disease once inspired. Its appearance in cities was the signal for dispersion; when it prevailed in the country, people imprisoned themselves in their houses; when it broke out in armies and fleets, dismay seized the stoutest hearts. It was the precursor of discomfiture and ruin, except when, from the proximity of the enemy, his forces also fell beneath the scourge of the impartial plague. When it subsided, it was after the death of thousands; and, of those who survived, the larger number bore permanent and often melancholy traces of its ravages. Successive means have been discovered or devised to disarm it of its terrors, and it has so long ceased to be a scourge of modern society, that due thought is not had of the blessing we enjoy in the exemption. But, at the period of which we speak, the art of inoculation had obtained but little prevalence; and, such were the prejudice and ignorance of the age, that the practice of it was, as late as 1769, forbidden by law in Virginia. On the

17th of November, Washington was "strongly attacked," to use the expression in his journal, with this disease, with which he was confined to his lodgings till the 12th of the following month. Some slight traces of it are said to have remained upon his countenance for the rest of his days.* He thus happily, in the morning of his life, and in the favorable climate of the tropics, passed through this formidable ordeal, and, before his military career commenced, was placed beyond the reach of danger from a disease, which, in one of his letters to the Governor of Virginia in the year 1777, he mentions "as more destructive to an army in the natural way, than the enemy's sword." While the American army under Washington lay before Boston in the first campaign, it was one of his cares to guard it against this disease, although we cannot persuade ourselves there was any truth in the reports brought by the British deserters from Boston, that a design was entertained by the royal commander to communicate it to the American camp. The circumstance, on which Washington was inclined to give some credit to this report, may be explained in a manner less abhorrent to humanity; nor would he, probably, on a calm review of the facts, have entertained the suspicion that General Howe could meditate so nefarious a project.

The hopes of restoration which induced his brother Lawrence to prolong his stay in the West Indies were disappointed. He returned the following summer, and died prematurely and greatly lamented, at the age of thirty-four, leaving a widow and an infant daughter. Great care and responsibility devolved by his decease on his brother George. The estate of Mount Vernon was bequeathed to the daughter, with remainder to George in case of her decease. He was also, though the youngest, the most active executor; and, in consequence of his greater familiarity with the affairs of his brother, the chief labor of transacting the business devolved upon him. This trust was equally laborious and responsible, but was not permitted to divert him from his public duties, which on the contrary increased in magnitude. Soon after Governor Dinwiddie's arrival, the colony was portioned into four grand military divisions, Major Washington's commission was renewed, and he was intrusted with the command of one of them. It was the northern district, consisting of several

* Paulding's *Life of Washington*, Vol. I. p. 64.

counties. These were in turn to be visited ; their militia drilled, and inspected, and reviewed ; and a general system of manœuvre and discipline introduced. In this way, at the age of twenty years, and under a commission from the royal governor, and beneath the influence of the excitement of an impending struggle with the hereditary enemies of the British name and their savage allies, Washington was training himself and his fellow-citizens for the part they were to perform in a more eventful drama.

The great struggle between England and France for the monopoly of the continent, — a struggle which had held the civilization of the colonies in check for a century, — was now drawing to a crisis. England was granting large tracts of land on the western slope of the Alleghanies to the Ohio Company ; France, both from Canada and from Louisiana, was stretching a *cordon* of posts across the interior. Neither the property nor the jurisdiction belonged of right to either ; but it was appointed, that, through this agency, the empire of the great European powers over the present United States should be subverted, and the path opened to American Independence.

Intelligence was received at Williamsburg, that the French governor of Canada was pushing troops toward the head waters of the Ohio, and alienating the neighbouring Indian tribes from the British interest. Governor Dinwiddie determined to despatch a commissioner, in due form, invested with proper powers, to confer with the officer commanding the French troops ; to inquire on what authority he acted, and to learn his designs. The commission was delicate and hazardous, requiring discretion and ability, experience of the mode of travelling in the woods, power of physical effort and endurance, and knowledge of the Indian character. All these qualifications were found combined in Washington ; he promptly accepted the trust tendered to him, and started the next day on its execution. Washington's Journal of this expedition was published at the time, and is repeated in the standard authorities for his biography. That of his faithful companion, Gist, has recently been given to the world.* He dwells with greater particularity on an event, which Washington's modesty led him to despatch in a more summary

* In a late volume of the *Transactions of the Massachusetts Historical Society*.

manner. After encountering all the hardships of the wilderness and the season (it was mid winter), and various embarrassments thrown in his way by the French, Washington reached the head-quarters of their commanding officer and performed his errand. On the return of the party, the horses failed, from the inclemency of the weather and the severity of the march ; and Washington and his companion Gist (left by the friendly Indians), with their packs on their shoulders and guns in their hands, were compelled to make the toilsome march on foot. They were soon joined by Indians in the French interest, who had dogged them ever since they left the fort. One of them employed all the arts of savage cunning to get possession of the arms of Washington, and lead him and his companion astray in the forest. Baffled by their wariness, and perceiving them at nightfall to be worn down by the fatiguing march, the savage turned deliberately, and, at a distance of fifteen steps, fired at Washington and his companion. The rifle missed its aim. Washington and Gist sprang upon him and seized him. Gist was desirous of putting him to death. His life was certainly forfeited, but Washington would not permit it to be taken in cold blood. After detaining him a few hours he was allowed to escape ; and they pursued their journey, worn and weary as they were, through the dreary watches of a long December night.

Well knowing that the savages must be on their trail, they dared not stop till they reached the Alleghany, the clear and rapid stream, which, rising in Pennsylvania, sweeps round through the southwestern counties of New York, and descends into Pennsylvania, to unite with the Monongahela and form the Ohio. They hoped to be able to cross the Alleghany on foot, the only comfort which they promised themselves from the stinging severity of the weather. Unfortunately, the river was neither frozen across nor wholly open, but fringed with broken ice on each shore, while the middle of the stream was filled with cakes of ice furiously drifting along. With one poor hatchet, to use Washington's own expression, they commenced the construction of a raft. It was a weary day's work, not completed till sunset. They launched with it upon the stream, but were soon so surrounded and crushed by drifting masses of ice, that they expected every moment that their raft would go to pieces, and they themselves perish at midnight in the dark eddies of the

mountain stream. Washington planted his pole to stop the movement of the raft, till the fields of ice should float by ; but the raft was driven with so much force against the pole, that he himself was thrown out into ten feet of water. He saved himself by catching at one of the logs of which the raft was composed. Notwithstanding all their efforts, it was impossible to get the raft to either shore, and they were obliged to pass the night on an island in the middle of the river. Here they suffered extremely from the intense cold. The hands and feet of Mr. Gist were frozen. Happily, in the morning they found the ice between the island and the eastern bank of the river, sufficiently hard to bear their weight. They crossed without further disaster, and the same day reached a trading post recently established by Mr. Frazier, near the spot where the fatal battle of the Monongahela was fought a year and a half afterward.

Such was the commencement of Washington's active public services. Such was his journey, undertaken at a season of the year when the soldier is permitted to go into quarters ; in a state of weather when the hunter houses himself, and the woodman sits cowering over the fire ; undertaken amidst perils from which escape was all but miraculous ; and this too, not by a penniless adventurer, fighting his way through desperate risks to promotion and bread, but by a young planter already advantageously known to the community, and possessed of an ample property. In this his first official employment, at the age of twenty-one, Washington displayed upon an obscure theatre, where if he fell he would have fallen as a leaf in the forest, that courage, resolution, prudence, disinterestedness, and fortitude which through life marked his conduct. He sprang into active service considerate, wary, and fearless ; and that Providence, which had raised him up for other and higher duties, seemed to spread a protecting shield over his beloved head. It rarely happens in the busiest and most fortunate life, to escape unharmed from such risks, as were incurred by Washington, when thrown from the raft, or when the Indian's rifle was discharged at him within a few paces.

Major Washington's Journal and the letter of the French commander were laid before the Council. The latter was considered unsatisfactory, and the case was deemed by Governor Dinwiddie to have arisen, when he was authorized and required by his instructions to repel encroachment by force.

An order was issued to raise two companies of one hundred men each. One of them was placed under Major Trent, who was well acquainted with the frontiers, and was sent forward to enlist his company among the back settlers and traders, and to establish a fort at the confluence of the Alleghany and the Monongahela, the present site of Pittsburg, which Washington, on his expedition the preceding winter, had noticed and mentioned as an admirable spot for a military station. The other company was confided to Washington, who remained at Alexandria, as a convenient station for the rendezvous of his men, and the collecting and forwarding of the supplies, which were to be sent forward to the fort. The Governor's instructions to the officers were of a warlike character. They were directed to drive away, kill, destroy, or seize as prisoners, all persons, not the subjects of the king of Great Britain, who should attempt to settle, or take possession of, the lands on the Ohio river or its tributaries.

These preliminary steps being taken by the Governor and Council, the Legislature was ordered to assemble ; circulars were addressed to the governors of other provinces, and an attempt made, but unsuccessfully, to arouse a warm feeling throughout the colonies. When the Assembly convened, authority was granted for the enlistment of a regiment. Washington declined being regarded as a candidate for the chief command, but readily accepted the second place. The regiment consisted of six companies, and was placed under the command of Colonel Joseph Fry, an Englishman by birth, educated at the University of Oxford, skilled in the mathematical sciences, and much esteemed for the amiable qualities of his character. Extraordinary encouragement was held out to those who enlisted, by liberal grants of bounty lands. The ministry at London sanctioned the measures which had been adopted by Governor Dinwiddie, and authorized him to call to his aid two independent companies ; one from New York, and one from South Carolina.

Colonel Washington continued his head-quarters at Alexandria till the 1st of April. By this time, two companies had been collected at that place, with which he marched to Will's Creek, where he arrived on the 20th, having been joined on the way by another company under Captain Stephen. The march was impeded by the badness of the roads and the difficulty of procuring wagons to convey the baggage.

A part of Major Trent's men had already reached their destination, and had begun to build a fort at the junction of the Alleghany and the Monongahela. Just before reaching Will's Creek, an exaggerated report was brought to Washington, that this party had been captured by the French, who had descended in great force from Venango. The fact was true, although the numbers of the French had been greatly over-estimated. This was the first overt act of hostility in the memorable Seven Years' War ; that war which, in Europe, was rendered memorable by the ascent of Prussia, under Frederic the Great, into the first rank of powers, and by the vigor which Pitt infused into the British councils ; and in America, by the downfall of the French power.

The fort, which the French had captured from Trent's party, was enlarged and completed by them, and received the name of Duquesne, in honor of the Governor of Canada.

These events placed Washington in a very embarrassing and critical position. His colonel was still absent, and the responsibility of deciding and acting rested on himself. He occupied an advanced outpost ; the French were penetrating the country with a force greatly superior to his own, and reported to be much greater than it was, and his instructions required him to meet force with force. Under these circumstances, after calling a council of war, and addressing letters to the governors of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, he resolved to push boldly into the wilderness, clear and prepare the road as they proceeded, and, if possible, reach the Monongahela at the mouth of Redstone Creek, and establish a fort there. Nature was to be overcome, before the enemy was reached. Trees were felled, rocks removed, bridges thrown across torrents and rivers, and causeways built over marshes. Commissaries were faithless, or unable to fulfil their contracts in the wilderness, and great distress arose for want of bread. So much do men endure and suffer, to gain opportunities to destroy each other and to perish !

He started on the 1st of May with his little force, about one hundred and fifty men. Some time was lost in an unsuccessful experiment, to ascertain whether the party might not descend the Youghiogany. Scarcely returned from exploring this stream, Washington received a communication from Tanacharison, a friendly Indian chief, otherwise called

the Half-King, then with his people on the Monongahela, informing him that a party of French had been out two days marching toward him, and determined to attack the first English they should meet. This account was confirmed by another, representing the French as only fifteen miles distant. Ignorant of their numbers, or at what moment they might approach, Colonel Washington hastened to a position at a place called the Great Meadows, where he cleared away the bushes, threw up an entrenchment, and prepared, as he called it, "a charming field for an encounter." He then sent out scouts on horseback, who, however, returned without having seen any traces of the enemy. But the camp was alarmed, and kept under arms all night. Mr. Gist, the following day, came into camp, and reported that a party of French, consisting of fifty men, had been at his settlement the day before, and that he had observed their tracks within five miles of the Great Meadows.

It was now deemed certain that the French were approaching with hostile designs. Washington's instructions left no alternative, and the best preparations were made to meet them, which the circumstances admitted. About nine o'clock at night, another express arrived from the friendly Indian chief, stating that he had seen the tracks of two Frenchmen, and that the whole detachment was near. Colonel Washington immediately put himself at the head of forty men, and started to join the Half-King; the rest of his force was left to protect the camp. The rain fell in torrents, and the soldiers forced their way with difficulty through the dark and intricate woods.

The whole night was consumed in the march; and they reached the Indian encampment about sunrise. A council was held with Tanacharison and his chief warriors, and it was agreed that they should march in concert against the French. Two Indians were sent out to reconnoitre the enemy, who were found concealed in an obscure position, a half a mile from the main road. Colonel Washington and his men advanced on the right, and the Indians on the left, in single file. The French, as soon as they perceived them, seized their arms, and the firing commenced on both sides. A smart skirmish ensued for a quarter of an hour, when the French ceased to resist. M. de Jumonville, their commander, and ten of his men were killed. Twenty-two were

taken prisoners, one of whom was wounded. One of Colonel Washington's men was killed, and two or three were wounded ; of the Indians none were killed. This event occurred on the 28th of May, 1754. The prisoners were conducted to the Great Meadows, and thence, under a guard, to Williamsburg.

This incident has furnished the occasion of perhaps the only reproach, which has been brought against the pure fame of Washington, in his long and various career ; and an unfortunate and accidental circumstance, which will presently be stated, has been seized upon, as sustaining the justice of this reproach, by the authority of Washington himself. As this was the commencement of a war, each party was desirous of fastening upon the other the blame of striking the first blow. The English accused the French of having commenced hostilities, by forcibly dislodging Trent's men from the fort they had begun to build, at the Fork of the Ohio, and regarded the advance of Jumonville's party as the invasion of the territory of Virginia. The French maintained, that neither of these acts was warlike, that Jumonville was sent on a peaceful errand to summon Washington and his force to quit the country, and that the attack upon him, which resulted in his death and that of ten of his men, was unprovoked and murderous. This view of the subject took strong hold of the public mind in France, and has been perpetuated to the present day. It was founded on the erroneous report of the facts transmitted at the time by M. Contrecoeur, the commander of the body from which Jumonville was detached, and who was probably misled by a Canadian, who, by his own account, escaped, at the commencement of the action. Mr. Sparks has related the events from the official letters of Washington, which are now for the first time published, and which are sustained by such extracts from the Journal of Washington, captured a year after at Braddock's defeat, as the French government at the time thought fit to disclose. It would require too much space to discuss the subject in all its details. It forms the matter of a very able annotation by Mr. Sparks, in the Appendix to the second volume of the work before us. Whatever may be thought of the pretexts on which England and France claimed a right to exclude each other from a territory that belonged to neither, the destruction and capture of Jumonville and his

band were legitimate consequences of the state of inchoate war, into which the parties by successive steps had plunged themselves. The French commander at Venango had been apprized a year before, that the Governor of Virginia regarded his progress toward the Ohio as an encroachment on the British territory, and had placed his government in a position to sustain the principle of this message by force. The ministers at London approved his course. In pursuance of this policy, troops were raised, and an advanced party of Virginians entrenched themselves at the Fork of the Ohio. This party was dislodged by an overwhelming force of French and Indians, who entered the country in the array of war, with a train of artillery. Washington was known to the French commander to be on his advance, and Jumonville with thirty-five men was despatched toward him. The precise object of this detachment does not distinctly appear. Washington received constant information from settlers who were driven in, from traders, and from friendly Indians, leading him to suppose that the main body was in full advance upon him, and that Jumonville was sent forward to reconnoitre and procure information, or for some other hostile purpose. The position, in which he was finally surprised, confirmed the opinion. The positive instructions under which Washington was placed, left him no choice, and threw upon Jumonville the responsibility of the consequences. It is in fact astonishing, that, in the face of the events which immediately followed this enterprise, the French should, at any period, have regarded themselves as the party assailed.

By the death of Colonel Fry, Washington was left in command of the regiment, the strength of which was increased by a single company from Alexandria, whose commander, Captain Mackay, however, in consequence of holding a royal British commission, declined to put himself under the command of Washington. To obviate, in some degree, the inconveniences of this unhappy pretension, Washington pushed forward his companies to an advanced position, intending, if possible, to reach the banks of the Monongahela, and leaving Captain Mackay as a guard for the protection of Fort Necessity, the name which he had given to the entrenchment which he had thrown up at the Great Meadows after the affair with Jumonville. While pushing his way laboriously forward, Washington received information from In-

dians and deserters, that Fort Duquesne had been reinforced from Canada, and that a strong detachment would shortly march against the English. The superior force of the enemy compelled a retreat to Fort Necessity. It was not the intention of Washington to halt here ; but the exhaustion of his men, who had been without bread eight days, made it necessary to give them rest. A small quantity of flour was in store at the fort, and farther supplies were anxiously awaited. Time would fail us to recount, in detail, the incidents of the disastrous battle of Fort Necessity. This was a hasty work, thrown up by Washington, at the foot of the mountains ; and, before reinforcements could arrive from Virginia, the joint French and Indian army was upon him. A sharp action took place on the 3d of July, 1754, which was kept up till a late hour in the evening. The Virginian force had become considerably reduced since its first entrance into the wilderness, the French outnumbered it greatly ; but the French commander saw that he had to do with men, determined, if pushed to extremities, to sell their lives dear. He proposed a capitulation, and a parley was held to settle its terms. Van Braam, a captain in the Virginia regiment, and the only man in it who understood the French language, was sent by Colonel Washington to treat with the French commander. The articles of capitulation, drawn up in French, and treacherously or timidly assented to by Van Braam, speak of the prisoners made by the British "*dans l'assassinat du Sieur Jumonville*," "at the *assassination* of Jumonville." These articles were interpreted to Washington at midnight, under a drenching rain, amidst the wrecks of the battle which had lasted ten hours. The word *assassinat*, (as was steadily asserted by Washington and his brother officers, when, some weeks after, they first learned that such a word appeared in the original,) was not literally rendered by Van Braam. In a letter written to a person who had addressed him on the subject, Washington states, that the word *assassination* was not used, but that the term employed by Van Braam, was *death* or *loss*. The articles, in other respects, were unfaithfully rendered, either from ignorance or design ; and, in fact, the idea, that any men (to say nothing of such a man as Washington), who were in a condition to make terms of capitulation, to retain their arms and baggage, and withdraw from the field, would agree to subscribe themselves assassins,

is absurd. It must be but a poor spirit who would do this, even if reduced to surrender at discretion.

We have dwelt the longer on this point, because it is the only one of plausible reproach to the fame of Washington, and because the whole case and truth are, for the first time, unfolded by Mr. Sparks from the original documents. The correspondence of Washington was collated by him in the Office of the Board of Trade, at London, and he obtained copies from Governor Dinwiddie's letter-book now in the hands of an individual in England. His researches are the more valuable, as the public papers of Virginia for this period have been destroyed.

A similar remark might be made, in reference to the entire account of the battle of the Monongahela, more commonly called Braddock's defeat, one of the leading incidents in the life of Washington, as it is one of the most important events in the military history of the colonies before the Revolution. This interesting portion of his work was executed by Mr. Sparks, in a considerable degree, from original researches of his own. It is illustrated by a topographical sketch formed on personal inspection of the localities, and may be selected as one of the best specimens of the narrative style of the author.

“At this time Colonel Washington was seized with a raging fever, which was so violent as to alarm the physician ; and, as an act of humanity, the general ordered him to proceed no further, till the danger was over ; with a solemn pledge that he should be brought up to the front of the army before it should reach the French fort. Consigned to a wagon, and to the physician's care, he continued with the rear division nearly two weeks, when he was enabled to be moved forward by slow stages, but not without much pain from weakness and the jolting of the vehicle. He overtook the general at the mouth of the Youghiogany River, fifteen miles from Fort Duquesne, the evening before the battle of the Monongahela.

“The officers and soldiers were now in the highest spirits, and firm in the conviction, that they should within a few hours victoriously enter the walls of Fort Duquesne. The steep and rugged grounds, on the north side of the Monongahela, prevented the army from marching in that direction ; and it was necessary in approaching the fort, now about fifteen miles distant, to ford the river twice, and march a part of the way on the south side. Early on the morning of the 9th, all things

were in readiness, and the whole train passed through the river a little below the mouth of the Youghiogany, and proceeded in perfect order along the southern margin of the Monongahela. Washington was often heard to say during his lifetime, that the most beautiful spectacle he had ever beheld was the display of the British troops on this eventful morning. Every man was neatly dressed in full uniform, the soldiers were arranged in columns and marched in exact order, the sun gleamed from their burnished arms, the river flowed tranquilly on their right, and the deep forest overshadowed them with solemn grandeur on their left. Officers and men were equally inspirited with cheering hopes and confident anticipations.

“ ‘In this manner they marched forward till about noon, when they arrived at the second crossing-place, ten miles from Fort Duquesne. They halted but a little time, and then began to ford the river and regain its northern bank. As soon as they had crossed, they came upon a level plain, elevated only a few feet above the surface of the river, and extending northward nearly half a mile from its margin. Then commenced a gradual ascent at an angle of about three degrees, which terminated in hills of a considerable height at no great distance beyond. The road from the fording-place to Fort Duquesne led across the plain and up this ascent, and thence proceeded through an uneven country, at that time covered with wood.

“ ‘By the order of march, a body of three hundred men, under Colonel Gage, made the advanced party, which was immediately followed by another of two hundred. Next came the general with the columns of artillery, the main body of the army, and the baggage. At one o'clock the whole had crossed the river, and almost at this moment a sharp firing was heard upon the advanced parties, who were now ascending the hill, and had proceeded about a hundred yards from the termination of the plain. A heavy discharge of musketry was poured in upon their front, which was the first intelligence they had of the proximity of an enemy, and this was suddenly followed by another on their right flank. They were filled with the greater consternation, as no enemy was in sight, and the firing seemed to proceed from an invisible foe. They fired in their turn, however, but quite at random and obviously without effect.

“ ‘The general hastened forward to the relief of the advanced parties ; but, before he could reach the spot which they occupied, they gave way and fell back upon the artillery and the other columns of the army, causing extreme confusion, and striking the whole mass with such a panic, that no order could afterwards be restored. The general and the officers

behaved with the utmost courage, and used every effort to rally the men, and bring them to order, but all in vain. In this state they continued nearly three hours, huddling together in confused bodies, firing irregularly, shooting down their own officers and men, and doing no perceptible harm to the enemy. The Virginia provincials were the only troops, who seemed to retain their senses, and they behaved with a bravery and resolution worthy of a better fate. They adopted the Indian mode, and fought each man for himself behind a tree. This was prohibited by the general, who endeavoured to form his men into platoons and columns, as if they had been manœuvring on the plains of Flanders. Meantime the French and Indians, concealed in the ravines and behind trees, kept up a deadly and unceasing discharge of musketry, singling out their objects, taking deliberate aim, and producing a carnage almost unparalleled in the annals of modern warfare. More than half of the whole army, which had crossed the river in so proud an array only three hours before, were killed or wounded. The general himself received a mortal wound, and many of his best officers fell by his side.*

“During the whole of the action, as reported by an officer who witnessed his conduct, Colonel Washington behaved with ‘the greatest courage and resolution.’ Captains Orme and Morris, the two other aids-de-camp, were wounded and disabled, and the duty of distributing the general’s orders devolved on him alone. He rode in every direction, and was a conspicuous mark for the enemy’s sharp-shooters. ‘By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence,’ said he, in a letter to his brother, ‘I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet I escaped unhurt, although death was levelling my companions on every side of me.’ So bloody a contest has rarely been witnessed. The number of officers in the engagement was eighty-six, of whom twenty-six were killed, and thirty-seven wounded. The killed and wounded of the privates amounted to seven hundred and fourteen. On the other hand, the enemy’s loss was small. Their force amounted at least to eight hundred and fifty men, of whom six hundred were Indians. According to the returns, not more than forty were killed. They fought in deep ravines, concealed by the bushes, and the balls of the English passed over their heads.”† — Vol. I. pp. 64 – 68.

* See *Washington's Writings*, Vol. II. p. 469, Appendix.”

† A report has long been current in Pennsylvania, that Braddock was shot by one of his own men, founded on the declaration of a provincial soldier, who was in the action. There is another tradition, also, worthy of

We have passed, from necessity, over the events of the twelve months, which intervened between the retreat from Fort Necessity and the battle of the Monongahela, at which Washington, as is well known, was present only as a volunteer, in the capacity of aid to the commander-in-chief. Neither is it in our power to follow him from the period of this disaster to the close of the war. It is sufficient to say, that from this time forward, young as he was, his reputation was firmly established, and his relation to the country ascertained. There is something scarcely explicable in the hold he had acquired of the minds of thoughtful men. Never did victorious consul return to republican Rome loaded with the spoils of conquered provinces, an object of greater respect, admiration, and confidence, than Washington, at the age of twenty-three, at the close of two campaigns, from one of which, he was able to save his regiment only by a painful capitulation; in the other, barely escaping with his life and the wreck of an army. He thus formed to himself on fields of disaster and defeat, a reputation for consummate bravery, conduct, and patriotism. The remarkable prediction of the Reverend Samuel Davis, afterwards President of Princeton College, must never be forgotten, when the early life of Washington is narrated. In a sermon preached about this period, to the volunteers of Hanover County, in Virginia, he uses this extraordinary language. "As a remarkable instance of patriotism, I may point out to the public, that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."

notice, which rests on the authority of Dr. Craik, the intimate friend of Washington from his boyhood to his death, and who was with him at the battle of the Monongahela. Fifteen years after that event, they travelled together on an expedition to the western country, with a party of woodsmen, for the purpose of exploring wild lands. While near the junction of the Great Kenhawa and Ohio Rivers, a company of Indians came to them with an interpreter, at the head of whom was an aged and venerable chief. This personage made known to them by the interpreter, that, hearing Colonel Washington was in that region, he had come a long way to visit him, adding, that, during the battle of the Monongahela, he had singled him out as a conspicuous object, fired his rifle at him many times, and directed his young warriors to do the same, but to his utter astonishment none of their balls took effect. He was then persuaded, that the youthful hero was under the special guardianship of the Great Spirit, and ceased to fire at him any longer. He was now come to pay homage to the man, who was the particular favorite of Heaven, and who could never die in battle." — *Washington's Writings*, Vol. II. p. 475, Appendix.

It is out of our power to pursue further the life of Washington. We have sketched the early life from the materials collected by Mr. Sparks, because it is of course in this portion, that the life of Washington is less exclusively than it afterwards becomes, the history of the country, and because, in reference to this period, Mr. Sparks's researches, valuable in every portion, contain the most original information.*

At the close of the war, he retired to Mount Vernon, which had now become his property, by the effect of his brother's bequest. He had been engaged in military service uninterruptedly for five years ; and, at the age of twenty-six, when the majority of able and hopeful men are first emerging into general notice, he had, by his extraordinary and successful labors, gained reputation, influence, and a fixed character in public estimation. On the 6th of January, 1759, he married Mrs. Martha Custis, the widow of John Parke Custis, a lady three months younger than himself, distinguished for her beauty and accomplishments. She was the daughter of John Dandridge, and was, by the former marriage, the mother of a son six years old, and a daughter four. By this marriage a large accession was made to the property of Washington, already ample by the inheritance of Mount Vernon, and by the selection of large tracts of valuable lands, which he had been able to make as a surveyor. His attention was henceforward turned toward the management of his numerous plantations and his extensive private affairs. He also took upon himself the guardianship of Mrs. Washington's two children, and the care of their large property, which trust he discharged with the faithfulness of a parent, and the punctuality peculiarly his own, till the majority of the son, and the death of the daughter, in her nineteenth year. The matrimonial connexion of Washington was eminently happy, and continued for forty years, till his death. With her intimate acquaintances, the character of Mrs. Washington was the theme of untiring praise. To the nation at large, she was the object of affectionate respect ; for it was known to all men, that she made the home of the Father of his country happy. Affable and courteous, exemplary in her deportment, remarkable for deeds of charity, unostentatious, and without vanity, she adorned private life by her domestic virtues, and

* In the foregoing sketch of the early life of Washington, use has been made of an address delivered at Beverly (Mass.), on the 4th of July, 1835.

filled with dignity and grace every station to which her husband's eminence called her. There is no doubt, that much of the calm and equable action of Washington's character is to be ascribed to the happy influence of his wife, to the freedom from domestic care, resulting from her excellent management, and to the ever-springing renovation of exhausted spirits, which can rarely be enjoyed but in a cheerful home. It is to be regretted, that so few memorials are preserved of this excellent lady. Mr. Sparks has gratified his readers with a long extract from a letter to Mrs. Warren, of this State, written shortly after the return of the President from his tour in New England, which presents a delightful picture of a well-balanced female mind.*

Before he left the army, Washington had been elected to the House of Burgesses. As his duty prevented his personal attendance at the polls, and he was a candidate for the county which had been the theatre of his military command, the duties of which had required him at times to impress the property, to oppose the wishes, and sometimes disappoint the expectations of the people, prone to look to military commanders for more than they can accomplish, his triumph over four competitors was justly deemed an eminent proof of his abilities, and possession of the public confidence. It was the first place to which he was called by the popular favor, which from this time forward encompassed him as with a genial atmosphere while he lived, and distilled in tears of universal, heartfelt sorrow over his honored grave. During his attendance at the House of Burgesses, that delightful incident occurred, of which it might not be easy to find a parallel in the history of legislation. The presence of a pure and lofty character seems to convert the stern and arid forms of parliamentary procedure into the gentle courtesy of a chivalrous romance. Mr. Sparks quotes it from Wirt's "Life of Patrick Henry."

"By a vote of the House, the Speaker, Mr. Robinson, was directed to return their thanks to Colonel Washington on behalf of the Colony, for the distinguished military services he had rendered the country. As soon as Colonel Washington took his seat, Mr. Robinson, in obedience to this order, and following the impulse of his own generous and grateful heart, discharged the duty with great dignity, but with such warmth of coloring and strength of expression, as entirely confounded

* Vol. I. p. 457.

the young hero. He rose to express his acknowledgments for the honor ; but, such was his trepidation and confusion, that he could not give distinct utterance to a single syllable. He blushed, stammered, and trembled for a second ; when the Speaker relieved him by a stroke of address, which would have done honor to Louis the Fourteenth in his proudest and happiest moment. ‘ Sit down, Mr. Washington,’ said he, with a conciliating smile, ‘ your modesty equals your valor ; and that surpasses the power of any language that I possess.’ ”*

From this time to the beginning of the Revolution, a period of fifteen years, Washington continued a member of the House of Burgesses, seven years for the County of Frederic, and afterwards for that of Fairfax. There were commonly two and sometimes three sessions a year ; and it appears from a record in his handwriting, that he gave his attendance punctually, and from beginning to end of almost every session. His influence in public bodies was that of good sense, attention to business, disinterestedness and integrity beyond suspicion, and general weight of character. He seldom spoke, never harangued. It is not known, that he ever made a set speech, or entered into a vehement debate. But his attention was unremitting ; he thoroughly informed himself on the prominent topics, and, when occasion required, delivered his opinion clearly, concisely, and firmly. His judgment, as to the proper course of conduct to be observed by a member of a deliberative assembly, may be inferred from the counsel he gave to a nephew, who had just taken his seat, as a member of the Assembly.

“ ‘ The only advice I will offer,’ said Washington, ‘ if you have a mind to command the attention of the House, is to speak seldom but on important subjects, except such as particularly relate to your constituents ; and, in the former case, make yourself perfectly master of the subject. Never exceed a decent warmth, and submit your sentiments with diffidence. A dictatorial style, though it may carry conviction, is always accompanied with disgust.’ ” — Vol. i. p. 109.

It is probable that in the foregoing judgment, Washington does more than justice to the style of address which he condemns. It may be doubted whether conviction was ever wrought in a disgusted mind. Such a mind is unconsciously, and by a law of our nature, thrown into a position of dis-

* Wirt's *Life of Patrick Henry*, 3d edit. p. 45.

trust and incredulity. The extraordinary spectacle, so often witnessed, of grave assemblies, which sit admiring but passive listeners to the most eloquent harangues, from acute, well-instructed, and accomplished speakers, is to be explained by moral causes. The ancient rhetoricians unfolded the entire philosophy of this matter, when they taught that none but a good man could be an orator.

The legislative labors of Washington, in the interval between his retirement from the army, and the Revolution, of course furnished occupation for but a small part of his time. His chief pursuits were agricultural. He superintended his numerous and extensive plantations with the greatest assiduity. Mr. Sparks has preserved in his twelfth volume, a specimen of his agricultural papers, of great curiosity and interest. It is impossible, without an accurate inspection of these papers, to form an idea of the rigid method and the laborious punctuality, with which Washington transacted his own business, and which he required from all in his employment, not merely while resident at Mount Vernon, but during his administration, and while he was absent at the seat of government. At these times, as we learn from a note, by Mr. Sparks, to one of the detailed weekly reports of his manager, it was the custom of Washington to exact a similar report once a week, from the manager at Mount Vernon, of the proceedings on all the farms. These reports commenced with a meteorological table, the object of which was to communicate such a knowledge of the weather, as would enable Washington to form a more correct judgment of the amount of time, that the laborers could properly be employed at their work. The report contained a minute statement of the quantity and kind of labor performed by every individual in the establishment, and was required to be accompanied by an explanatory letter. These were answered by the President once a week or oftener, the answers sometimes filling two or three closely written sheets. They were first prepared in a rough draft, and then transcribed in a fair hand by Washington, a press copy being retained. This laborious process was pursued by him during the entire period of his administration.

The business of a planter at this period, in Virginia, partook to a considerable extent of the nature of commercial transactions. Tobacco was the great staple product in the

lower counties, and to this Washington particularly gave his attention. The crop was shipped by him, in his own name, to his correspondents in London, Liverpool, and Bristol, on board vessels which came up the Potomac to Mount Vernon, or to other convenient points on the river. A portion of the returns was made in the articles of British manufacture required for the consumption of the household, and on the plantations, not excepting wearing apparel for every member of the family. Mr. Sparks has preserved specimens of the invoices of these articles. They are equally curious as illustrating the manners of the day, and humiliating as proof of the dependence of America on a foreign country. It affords an instructive lesson of political delusion, to cast one's eye over the list of imported articles, and reflect that intelligent British statesmen really thought, that America not only ought, but could, while beds of iron ore and of coal spread beneath the soil and interminable forests above it, be compelled by acts of Parliament, by the magic virtue of cockets and clearances, as Burke, in the bitterness of his derision, expressed it, to send three thousand miles across the Atlantic ocean, for ploughs, hoes, spades, and scythes.

Mr. Sparks has extracted, from an order sent to a tailor in London, a memorandum of the person of Washington, from his own hand. He describes himself as "six feet high, and proportionably made; if any thing, rather slender for a person of that height," and adds, that his limbs were long. This was at the age of thirty-one. His exact measure, Mr. Sparks observes, was six feet and three inches. One of the orders transmitted to London, for the usual annual supply, contains a grouping of articles which, though casual in itself, would not need to be disturbed in a philosophical classification. The list contained an order for eight busts, and closes in the following manner;

"Directions for the Busts.

"4. One of Alexander the Great, another of Julius Cæsar, another of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, and a fourth of the King of Prussia. — N. B. These are not to exceed fifteen inches in height, nor ten in width.

"2 other busts of the Prince Eugene and Duke of Marlborough, somewhat smaller.

"2 *wild beasts*, not to exceed twelve inches in height nor eighteen in length.

"Sundry small ornaments for chimney-piece." — Vol. XII. p. 256.

Attempts have been made by some British writers, to bring into question the zeal and sincerity, with which, at the outset, Washington embarked in the patriotic cause ; and they have asserted, that he was brought with difficulty to take part in the measures of resistance, which were adopted by the sanguine leaders. Mr. Sparks ascribes this impression to the fact, that his name is not mentioned at the earliest period among the conspicuous actors ; and it was perhaps strengthened by the purport of the spurious letters, which in the year 1776 were published in London, republished in New York, and circulated with great diligence, as far as possible, throughout the country. The author of these letters is not known. Mr. Sparks, in intimating that they may have contained parts of his genuine letters, which had been intercepted, seems to authorize the inference, that their publication was connived at and promoted by authority. Their tenor is the basest that can be imagined. They represent Washington, as expressing to the members of his family and his confidential friends, sentiments totally at variance with his conduct, and as deprecating the misguided zeal and rashness of Congress, in declaring independence, and pushing matters to extremity. At the time of their appearance, Washington disdained to notice or contradict them. Toward the end of his presidency, says Mr. Sparks, “ when a new edition of these same forgeries was palmed upon the public, to gratify the spleen of a malignant party spirit, and to effect a purpose even more infamous than the one contemplated by their original author, he declared them in a letter to the Secretary of State to be spurious and false.” No man in America took a more early, open, and decided part, in asserting and defending the rights of the colonies, and opposing the pretensions of the British government. In the Virginia legislature, he went heart and hand with Henry, Randolph, Lee, Wythe, and the other prominent patriots of the time. His opinions and his principles were consistent throughout. That he looked for a conciliation, till the convening of the first Congress, and perhaps till the rejection of the petition to the King, there is no doubt ; so did Franklin, Jay, John Adams, Jefferson, and probably all the other master-spirits, who gave the tone to public sentiment and action.*

* We use the words of Mr. Sparks, Vol. I. p. 116, where the point is pursued, and placed beyond question.

From the moment of entering upon the war, Washington's history is the history of the Revolution ; and this history, it is not too much to say, Mr. Sparks has written anew, in his notes and annotations to the writings of Washington, and in his "Life," contained in the first volume. We do not, of course, mean, that any discoveries of great leading incidents remained to be effected ; but numerous errors of detail have been corrected, particulars of interest supplied, and much original illustration of every kind furnished.

To attempt any thing like a sketch of the subsequent portion of this biography would be manifestly impossible. We can but touch on a few miscellaneous heads ; observing only, by the way, that there is not a topic of importance in his career, on which Mr. Sparks has not shed new light, and in reference to which he has not probably given, whether it be satisfactory or not, nearly or quite all the information which can now be retrieved.

In the Appendix to the third volume, there is a highly interesting annotation on the subject of the original appointment of Washington, as Commander-in-chief of the American armies. There were individuals in America, such as Lee and Gates, who had seen much more service in former and European wars. Massachusetts and other New England States, who had begun the war, had their armies in the field, and their generals in commission. There were accordingly points of expediency to decide, and questions of delicacy to settle. The first suggestion of the name of Washington which Mr. Sparks cites, is from a letter of Vice-President Gerry, then a member of the provincial Congress at Watertown. It is dated on the 4th of June, 1775, and is addressed to the Massachusetts delegates in the Continental Congress. It is a formal recommendation of "the beloved Colonel Washington as generalissimo ; and this is a matter," (adds Mr. Gerry,) "in which Dr. Warren agrees with me, and we had intended to write you jointly in the affair." In discussing the question respecting the disposal of the army, by which, after the 19th of April, the British troops were besieged in Boston, John Adams made a motion, that it should be adopted by the Continent ; and, in enforcing this motion, he said it was his intention to propose for the office of Commander-in-chief, a gentleman from Virginia, and one of their own body. His reference to Washington was so

direct, that the latter withdrew. It is believed, that the nomination was actually made, at a subsequent day, by Mr. Thomas Johnson, of Maryland. The choice was made by ballot, and was unanimous. It has been commonly, though erroneously stated, that the nomination was made by Mr. John Adams. No person, probably, had a greater agency in bringing it about ; but it was deemed advisable, on the score of policy, that it should not proceed from a Northern delegate. The apprehension may have been of jealousies to be excited, on the part of the general officers, already commissioned by Massachusetts. Three days after the appointment of Washington, Mr. Adams thus expressed himself in a letter to Mr. Gerry ;

“There is something charming to me in the conduct of Washington. A gentleman of one of the first fortunes upon the Continent, leaving his delicious retirement, his family and friends, sacrificing his ease, and hazarding all in the cause of his country ! His views are noble and disinterested. He declared when he accepted the mighty trust, that he would lay before us an exact account of his expenses, and not accept a shilling for pay.”* — Vol. III. p. 481.

Among the curious original materials collected by Mr. Sparks, not the least interesting are the extracts from the correspondence of General Gage and the Earl of Dartmouth, which are now for the first time given to the world. It was the opinion of General Gage, till perhaps the event of the battle of Bunker Hill, that a demonstration of ample military force, the arrest of the patriotic leaders, and a proclamation of pardon for the rest of the population, would be sufficient to crush the rebellion. On the 18th of January, 1775, he writes to the minister, that, if these measures are adopted, “Government will come off victorious, and with less opposition than was expected a few months ago.” On the 15th of April a letter was written by Lord Dartmouth, approving this policy ; and General Gage’s famous proclamation of the 12th of June, offering a pardon to all who should immediately lay down their arms and return to their duty, except Samuel Adams and John Hancock, was issued in consequence. On the 25th of June, General Gage transmitted the official ac-

* A fac-simile of this account has lately been published from the original, preserved in the Department of State.

count of the battle of Bunker Hill. In his letter accompanying the account he thus expresses himself ;

“ The *success*, of which I send your Lordship an account by the present opportunity, was very necessary in our present situation, and I wish most sincerely that it had not cost us so dear. The number of killed and wounded is greater than our forces can afford to lose. The officers, who were obliged to exert themselves, have suffered very much, and we have lost some very good officers. The trials we have had show the rebels are not the despicable rabble too many have supposed them to be ; and I find it owing to a military spirit, encouraged among them for a few years past, joined with an uncommon degree of zeal and enthusiasm, that they are otherwise. When they find cover they make a good stand, and the country, naturally strong, affords it to them ; and they are taught to assist its natural strength by art, for they intrench and raise batteries. They have fortified all the heights and passes around this town, from Dorchester to Medford or Mystic, and it is not impossible for them to annoy the town.” — Vol. III. p. 511.

The intelligence of the battle occasioned the recall of General Gage. A despatch had been made out for him just before the news reached England, but not yet forwarded, in which a sketch of future operations was given, and important questions propounded to him to be answered. As soon as the news of the battle of Bunker Hill arrived, a separate letter was written, dated August 2d, directing General Gage to hand over the despatch in question to General Howe, who would succeed him in the command, and return himself to England as soon as possible, “ in order to give his Majesty exact information of every thing that it may be necessary to prepare, as early as possible, for the operations of the next year, and to suggest to his Majesty such matters in relation thereto, as your knowledge and experience of the service enable you to suggest.” On the subject of the momentous events of the 19th April, Lord Dartmouth thus expresses himself in a letter of July 1st ;

“ I am to presume, that the measure of sending out a detachment of your troops to destroy the magazines at Concord was taken after the fullest consideration of the advantages on the one hand and the hazards on the other of such an enterprise, and all the probable consequences that were to result from it. It is impossible for me to reflect upon this transaction, and upon all its consequences, without feelings, which, although I

do not wish to conceal them, it is not necessary for me to express." — p. 512.

On the 24th of July, General Gage writes to Lord Dartmouth from Boston,

"The rebellion being general, I know of no better plan to quell it, than that I mentioned to your Lordship in a former letter. This province began it, I might say this town ; for here the arch-rebels formed their scheme long ago. This circumstance brought the troops first here, which is the most disadvantageous place for all operations, particularly when there is no diversion of the rebel forces, but all are collected into one point." — p. 513.

But it is in vain to dwell upon the curious details with which these volumes are replete. The judicious reader will find them on almost every page, and the more abundantly, the more carefully the work is studied. The accounts of the battles of the revolutionary war, are all written by Mr. Sparks, not in the way of an easy repetition of general results, stated in preceding histories, but from accurate examination of the mass of documents contained in General Washington's collections. In this way, there is perhaps no one of the battles of the Revolution, in which some facts omitted by other writers are not supplied, and some erroneous statements rectified. In the individual case, the defect supplied or the error corrected, may be of no great account ; but in the aggregate of the work, the most important service is rendered to the history of the Revolution, by this conscientious and elaborate revision. Our limits permit us to quote but a single instance, which we select, not as the most striking, but as the first which presents itself ; we mean the battle of Long Island. The account of this battle, drawn up at length and with much care by Chief Justice Marshall, does not probably convey a very accurate idea of the nature of the engagement, or of all the causes of the want of success on the part of the Americans. The fact, that the American works of defence had been planned by General Greene, and that in consequence of his sickness General Putnam was intrusted with the command, but four days before the battle, is placed in proper relief by Mr. Sparks. It is stated by the Chief Justice, that General Sullivan had the command of all the troops without the lines. But it does not appear that there was any general command without the lines. The greatest

force collected was under Lord Stirling, upon the American right. General Sullivan was at the centre, with a very small force, and in a letter to the President of Congress he observes, that the duty assigned him was to command within the lines, under General Putnam. He went out with a picket of four hundred men to reconnoitre, and was surrounded by an overwhelming force of the enemy. The Chief Justice, following, we believe, the British account, states, that General Sullivan "found it difficult to keep his troops together long enough to sustain the first attack." General Sullivan himself, in the letter just cited, states, that the opposition of his small band lasted from half past nine till twelve o'clock. General Howe in his official account states, that "many of Lord Stirling's party, in attempting to effect their escape, were suffocated and drowned in the marsh." This has been repeated on his authority by the historians. Mr. Sparks makes it probable, from original documents cited by him, that but a single man was lost in this way. We would not have our readers infer, from the manner in which we have stated the foregoing facts, that Mr. Sparks has executed his work in a controversial and critical spirit, and made it a business to detect and point out the errors of his predecessors. Most of his corrections (the foregoing among the rest), and rectifications, are made, so to speak, *sub silentio*, and it is only by comparison on the part of the reader, that the difference in the result is discovered. It would have been very easy for Mr. Sparks, had he pursued a different course, to have magnified the extent and importance of his own researches at the expense of his predecessors. But his mind was too full of Washington to think of himself.

Some of the most gratifying passages of Mr. Sparks's work are those which display the relations of Washington and Lafayette. This topic has now lost the charm of novelty. It happened, that, precisely at the time when the news of the decease of Lafayette reached this country, those portions of Mr. Sparks's publication appeared, which contained the accounts of his landing in America, and of his services in our armies. Although here also the leading facts could not but be already known, yet the outline has been filled up by Mr. Sparks with more than usual richness of material. It is true, that his opportunities were on no occasion so ample. General Lafayette himself placed at his disposal his entire

correspondence with the French government, and full commentaries on the events with which he was connected. From these sources, many facts not before known have been brought to light ; and we consider the fame of Lafayette as having been essentially promoted by Mr. Sparks's inquiries. A bitterness toward his memory, not easy to be explained, pervades the works of some writers, in reference to this distinguished benefactor of America. If any reason can be assigned, we fear it must be, that he passed through a long life and a stormy career, without any stain upon his character. The last thing which some men forgive, in a person of very great eminence, is a blameless life. To possess great power without abusing it, to have the means of gratifying a thirst for gold and blood, and to abstain from both, is an unpardonable sin. Washington himself barely escapes, — if indeed he do escape, — from the hands of the same judges of greatness, who affect to put the seal of mediocrity on Lafayette. And for the same reason. Brilliant qualities, balanced by brilliant vices, form a compound, as far as mixture goes, resembling the sorry combination of mean faults and cold virtues, which belongs to the mass of those, who rail at the very name of goodness in public men. Show them talent neutralized by want of principle, and they are content. It reconciles them to themselves. But, to lead armies, to sway the people, and head revolutions, without intrigue, avarice, or thirst of power, is a folly which they will not believe, and an insult they will not endure. The friends of Lafayette, however, may console themselves for the sneers or the rebukes of a thousand vulgar judges of character, by the single testimony of Washington. No man knew him better ; no man possessed a penetration into character more intuitive ; and there was no subject on which Washington was necessarily more alive than the employment of foreign officers. The correspondence of Washington and Lafayette is now spread out to the world ; and from the moment their acquaintance commenced to the death of Washington, in all the trying scenes of the Revolutionary war, and those, still more trying, in which Lafayette was afterwards plunged, it does not appear that the shadow of a cloud ever passed between them. As for the public services of Lafayette to America, they have never been, — not even in the fervor of his triumphant progress, — at all exaggerated. Looking back upon the history of the French alliance, under all the lights that have

been thrown upon it, by the numerous publications of late years, we remain of the opinion, that Lafayette was greatly and personally instrumental in rendering it, what under Providence it was, the means of bringing the Revolution to a successful issue. This and every other point relating to Lafayette, as far as comported with his main design, has been placed in proper light by Mr. Sparks, and few parts of his work will be read with greater satisfaction.

The "Cabal of Conway," usually so called, is treated by Mr. Sparks* in the *Life of Washington*, and in the progress of the Correspondence, with equal interest and discretion. If it be probable, that there is yet a portion of undivulged secret history relative to that incident, it must be left to be brought to light after a longer lapse of time, and by the gradual appearance of the letters, still in manuscript, of the leading personages of that day. It will be no matter of regret, should time and events, instead of disclosing what is yet unknown of that transaction, bury it still deeper in oblivion. The cabal of Conway was a short-lived and feeble intrigue; short-lived, not because those employed in it wanted the disposition to work permanent mischief, and feeble, not because they were men of mean station or contemptible parts; but because the object, at which they struck, was so firmly established on the rock of principle, that the plot exploded with the first hint of its existence. Nipped in the bud, some mystery has been thought to hang over its precise objects and the motives of those concerned in it; and a general impression, of a vague and undefined character, has gone abroad, that a faction existed in Congress and the army against General Washington, of which Conway was an agent, and Gates a member. We imagine, however, that the entire comprehension of the plot is stated in a letter of Washington himself to Patrick Henry, of the 28th of March, 1778.

"I cannot precisely mark the extent of their views; but it appeared in general, that General Gates was to be exalted on the ruin of my reputation and influence." — "General Mifflin, it is commonly supposed, bore the second part in the cabal; and General Conway, I know, was an active and malignant partisan." — Vol. V. p. 515.

It is probable, that the disaffection, at its outset, had no definite views. According to Mr. Sparks, it is supposed

* Vol. I. pp. 266 – 275, and Vol. V. p. 483.

that it had its origin in some disappointment experienced by Gates and Mifflin in the army at Cambridge. Gates filled the office of adjutant-general of the army, with the rank of brigadier. Mifflin was an aid-de-camp of the Commander-in-chief, by whom, under the authority of Congress, he was appointed quartermaster-general, with the rank of colonel. On the organization of the first Continental army, these officers desired commands in the line. Gates applied for a brigade, Mifflin for a regiment; both were refused. Conway was by birth an Irishman, and had served for thirty years in the French army. He was regarded as brave and skilled in war; it is against that supposition, that he was certainly vain, arrogant, boastful, intriguing, and false. After the capture of Burgoyne, he appears to have conceived the idea, that he might, out of the vanity and disaffection of Gates, the ambition of Mifflin, and the opposition which existed on the part of some members of Congress to the Commander-in-chief, construct a plot. Its immediate object was to compel Washington, by a series of official affronts, to resign his commission. Gates was to take his place at the head of the army, and Mifflin and Conway to fill the second and third places. The organization of a new board of war, of which Gates was the head, and Mifflin a member, and which adopted military plans without consulting the Commander-in-chief, was a bold and open measure of hostility.

It would almost surpass belief, were it not known from history, that a majority of Congress, who, as a body, really do not appear to have had a settled and definite distrust of the Commander-in-chief, could have been so inconsiderately and absurdly unjust, as to institute such a board. With this board for their public organ, confidential and anonymous letters to governors of States, officers of the army, and members of Congress, were relied upon to furnish private and unsuspected stimulus to discontent. Some of these were written by men, who probably lived to wish, that the right hands which penned them had forgotten their cunning. Washington was early made acquainted with the existence and progress of the intrigue. Many of those, whom it was attempted to debauch, no otherwise used the overtures made to them, than to put the beloved chief on his guard against his insidious enemies. At length information was given him from Lord Stirling, that he (the Commander-in-chief) had been spoken of in the most disrespectful manner by Conway, in

a letter to Gates. Without a word of comment, Washington addressed a note to Conway, enclosing him a sentence of this character, purporting to have been extracted from one of his letters to Gates. Conway explained, blustered, and justified; Gates equivocated, cowered, and deprecated; and their plot exploded at a single touch of the wand of truth. The detestation, with which it is remembered, is mitigated only by compassion for the humble timidity with which it was abandoned, disclaimed, and shuffled off from shoulder to shoulder. One feels some yearnings for Gates. All the glories of Saratoga withered in an hour in the poisonous breath of this sorry contrivance. History does not record a finer instance of the supremacy of a great character over the vulgar pretensions of mere success, unfounded upon a pure moral basis, than that which is afforded in the annihilation of a cabal headed by the conqueror of Burgoyne, beneath the unaided moral weight of Washington's integrity. No pains were spared to inveigle Lafayette into this unworthy conspiracy. He was offered the command of the expedition to Canada, which was projected by their trumpery board of war. With the advice of Washington he accepted it, evidently with the purpose, if it proceeded, of conducting it under the direction of the Commander-in-chief. But that expedition, and with it all organized action of the cabal which planned it, had but a short-lived being; and, although the traces of disaffection on the part of its members, in and out of Congress, may be perceived during the war, it never dared show itself again in a tangible form. By a singular coincidence, it fell to the lot of General Mifflin, as president of Congress at the close of the war, to act as the organ of that body in receiving the resignation of Washington, and pronouncing a warm eulogium on his character and services, in reply to his valedictory address.

We attempt no abstract of the correspondence or narration of Washington's revolutionary career. We content ourselves with remarking, that, proverbial as the renown of Washington has become throughout the world, as the successful chief of the American armies, familiar as is his praise in both hemispheres, the work of Mr. Sparks will add new lustre to his fame in this, as in all other respects. It will justify the language of eulogy, which has been reiterated till some may suspect its justice, while few feel it with all the freshness of

a recent judgment. It will present the astonishing spectacle of a person, clothed with the highest and most various civil and military trusts, during the entire continuance of a momentous revolution, engaged in the transaction of business of the most arduous, perplexing, and delicate character, and carrying on a boundless correspondence, under the pressure of military haste and urgency, and never, no never, writing a line requiring to be qualified, retracted, or explained ; never borne off by passion ; never lulled by the voice of adulation ; never yielding to caprice or to depression ; and exhibiting the same serene self-possession when he retreated with his panic-struck and dwindling army through the Jerseys, and when, at the head of the united forces of America and France, he granted terms of capitulation to Cornwallis. We have already repeated the well-known fact, that he declined, in the outset, all compensation beyond the reimbursement of his actual expenses. The sum total of these expenses, at the close of the eight years' war, (including, in the aggregate, nearly three thousand pounds lawful money, paid for secret service, reconnoitring, and travelling, which might well be considered public charges,) was less than fourteen thousand five hundred pounds of sterling money ; — a trifle more than was lately paid to the governor-general of Canada, during an administration of a year or two in time of peace ! Less per annum to Washington for his expenses, as Commander-in-chief of the armies of the Revolution, than is annually paid, *in time of peace*, to each of the three major-generals of the army of the United States ! When we contemplate a result like this, when we consider the vital importance of an example of frugality, in the circumstances in which the country was placed in the Revolution, — nay, more, when we reflect on the abiding value, in a republican country, of the example of a decent economy in high places, — the severe punctuality of Washington, alike as debtor and creditor, rises into a virtue.

The religious character of Washington is the subject of a very interesting annotation in the twelfth volume of Mr. Sparks's work. He observes, that he engages in the inquiry, not because the subject requires an argument, but because there have been “in certain quarters, discussions tending to throw doubts over his religious belief ; whether from ignorance of his character and writings, or from causes less cred-

itable," Mr. Sparks does not decide. He states, that there is a uniform tradition in the neighbourhood where he was born and educated, that he was brought up under religious influences. His early manuscripts, still preserved, contain traces of serious religious impressions. In his first campaigns in the old war, religious service was regularly performed in the little army under his command, and profane swearing was forbidden by him under severe penalties. While he lived at Mount Vernon, in the interval between the French war and the Revolution, he was elected a vestryman in two several parishes, and took an active part in church affairs. In 1774, a fast-day was appointed by the House of Burgesses, of which he was a member, and there is an entry in his diary, that he "went to church, and fasted all day." This diary was kept for several years with great particularity, and a Sabbath day rarely occurs, on which it does not appear that he went to church. The nearest church to Mount Vernon was seven miles distant. His orderly book, throughout the Revolution, contains innumerable proofs of the importance which he attached to religious observances and influences; and there is not wanting evidence, that he was even favorable to a legal provision for the support of teachers of religion by a general tax. It was his practice to attend church in the forenoon. The afternoon of Sunday he passed alone in his room, and the evening with his family. An old and intimate friend would sometimes visit him on that evening, but general visiting and visitors were prohibited. He appears, during the Revolution, to have intermitted his participation of the sacrament; though a striking instance of his communing, while the army was encamped at Morristown, is recorded in Dr. Hosack's "*Life of De Witt Clinton*." Mr. Robert Lewis, of Fredericksburg, was a nephew of Washington, and his private secretary during the first part of the Revolution. He of course lived with him on terms of intimacy. He informed Mr. Sparks, in 1827, "that he had accidentally witnessed his private devotions in his library both morning and evening; that on those occasions he had seen him in a kneeling posture, with a Bible open before him, and that he believed such to have been his daily practice." Mr. Sparks sums up the point in the following manner;

"After a long and minute examination of the writings of Washington, public and private, in print and in manuscript, I

can affirm, that I have never seen a single hint, or expression, from which it could be inferred, that he had any doubt of the Christian revelation, or that he thought with indifference or unconcern of that subject. On the contrary, whenever he approaches it, and indeed whenever he alludes in any manner to religion, it is done with seriousness and reverence.

“The foregoing observations have been made, not by way of argument, but merely as a statement of facts ; for I must end, as I began, by saying, that I conceive any attempt at argument in so plain a case would be misapplied. If a man, who spoke, wrote, and acted as a Christian through a long life, who gave numerous proofs of his believing himself to be such, and who was never known to say, write, or do a thing contrary to his professions, if such a man is not to be ranked among the believers of Christianity, it would be impossible to establish the point by any train of reasoning. How far he examined the grounds of his faith is uncertain, but probably as far as the large portion of Christians, who do not make theology a special study ; and we have a right to presume, that a mind like his would not receive an opinion without a satisfactory reason. He was educated in the Episcopal Church, to which he always adhered ; and my conviction is, that he believed in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity as usually taught in that Church, according to his understanding of them ; but without a particle of intolerance, or disrespect for the faith and modes of worship adopted by Christians of other denominations.”—*Vol. XII. p. 411.*

No period in the life of Washington is more important than that, which elapsed from the close of the Revolution to his death. It is in this period that his connexion is unfolded with the Constitution of the United States, with the organization of the Government, with its politics in the early stages of the French Revolution, and with the rise and progress of parties in the country. Much illustrative matter on all these points is contained in Mr. Sparks's annotations, but we are compelled to draw our article toward a close. To the independence of his personal position, his superiority to intrigue and even the suspicion of a selfish motive, — to his single-hearted patriotism, — his unerring practical judgment, — and certainly, above all, to that habitual reverence for his entire character, which grew out of his revolutionary services, the United States are in no small degree indebted for their happy escape from the peculiar dangers incident to their condition, in the fifteen years that

passed from the termination of the war. There were great and good men in every part of the country, there were elements of recovery and growth ; but a most perilous state of exhaustion and a frightful spirit of discord prevailed in the first part of this quarter of a century, and, in the last, still more active principles of disorder. Throughout the whole period, Washington remained a common rallying point to parties and sections. Those who doubted, or feared, or hated all else, believed in him ; — some, with a reasonable estimate of his character, others, with a perception of his influence over the general mind, and the most, with a kind of religious trust in his high vocation. To contemplate the action of such a character on the various elements of the contemporary world, is one of the noblest employments of the reflecting statesman, anxious to embalm and perpetuate an influence so salutary. In this department of American politics, the work of Mr. Sparks will remain the text-book.

The peculiar eminence of the character of Washington consists in no small degree in the want of those salient points, which identify the characters of common men, but which consist in the undue developement and over-action of a portion of the moral or intellectual system. It would not be easy to find a personage less adapted to the purposes of an historical romance, according to the laws which usually regulate that department of composition. The faults, which have sometimes been curiously pointed out in his character, are the faults, which a pupil of David would find in the pictures of Raphael, or a modern building-committee would detect in the Parthenon. The severe adjustment of all the parts of his character to each other produced a repose and harmony, which the vulgar mind interprets into an absence of decisive qualities. We think it would not be difficult, without over-refining, to show, that what have sometimes been regarded as the imperfections of Washington's character, could not without detriment have been supplied by the opposite qualities. Had he been an eloquent and fervid orator, he would necessarily have been implicated in the contentious discussions of the day. Had he been regardless of pecuniary interest and a man of less prosperous fortunes, though he might have gained credit for the amiable qualities, which find their scope in such circumstances, his unsuspected independence, and his actual capacity of public service, would have

been greatly impaired. Foreign writers have spoken of Washington, as destitute of warmth of feeling. This, no doubt, is an entire mistake. What they have ascribed to this defect, was the unquestionable result of severe self-discipline. Naturally he is known to have been of ardent temperament ;— that he was reckless of personal exposure in his youth, our preceding sketch has sufficiently shown. Had he entered the Revolution, less capable of performing the self-denying duties, which were required by the character of his materials,—armies made up of ever-shifting drafts of discontented militia, irresolute and distracted counsels in Congress, and an empty treasury,—the cause would have made shipwreck in one or two campaigns. An eminent degree of personal purity and conscious integrity is apt to be accompanied with a proportionate sensibility to reproach. There were periods in Washington's career, when he was assailed with every thing which could disaffect and discourage him ; but, of all the leading men of the armies of the Revolution, he is the only one who never dropped a hint of abandoning the cause in disgust. In short, let the person, who thinks he sees a blemish in the character of Washington, select from any other character in history, the trait or quality he could wish to engraft upon it, and he will probably be able to trace, by no forced association, the pernicious consequences of the change.

But fondly as we dwell upon it, we must retire from the theme. We rejoice to learn, that the proper measures have been taken to impart to Europe the advantages of an authentic collection of the writings of Washington. Arrangements have been made for publishing the whole work in England. A selection and translation into French, of those parts of it, which are best adapted to the foreign reader, will be made by M. Guizot. The same office will be performed for the German language, by Mr. Von Raumer, with the assistance of the accomplished daughter of Professor Tieck. In such hands, these precious relics will come before the continental public, as favorably as they have done before the American. Accompanying their translations with the requisite explanations and notes, we doubt not they will bring Washington to the firesides of the hundred millions in Europe, who receive their supplies of intellectual food, through the French and German languages.

We beg leave, if our humble page should fall beneath the eye of M. Guizot, to commend to his deliberate and candid consideration, that point on which alone in France, injustice has been done to Washington. We refer, of course, to the affair of Jumonville. The historical writers of that country, repeating each other, and adding new circumstances of exaggeration to an account originally flowing from one mistaken source, have at length associated with the memory of Washington a charge, which falls little short of cold-blooded murder. We trust to the impartiality of M. Guizot, to disabuse his countrymen ; to point out the entire want of evidence to support such a charge, and its incongruity with the character of Washington, as displayed in every other act of his life. Two years before, he had refused to permit the life of a treacherous savage to be taken, who had just snapped his rifle at himself and his companion, and was then in their power. Firmly believing as we do, that Washington is innocent of this reproach, he has been himself made the victim, in France, of the most cruel species of assassination, that which strikes at character, and soils a pure fame with stains of blood. To rescue such a character from unjust odium is the noblest prerogative of impartial history.

We cannot but think, that the countrymen of Washington are under especial obligations to the British government, then administered by the Duke of Wellington, for the extraordinary liberality with which their archives were opened to Mr. Sparks. We have reason to think, that he enjoyed a freedom of access to the papers preserved in the public offices, which would not readily have been granted to a British subject, and that this liberality had its strong motive in national comity. When it is considered, that the great objects of Mr. Sparks's researches were the events of a war with Great Britain, it cannot be deemed an ordinary exercise of magnanimity. Equal liberality was displayed by the ministry in France, though of course, in that quarter, in reference to the American war, less reason existed for an opposite course. It must be satisfactory to the liberal and distinguished individuals, who extended these important acts of courtesy to Mr. Sparks, that he has furnished them no cause to regret their generosity. Not a single trait of indiscretion is disclosed in his work. Far from abusing the great power placed in his hands, by being made the depository of the

entire correspondence of Washington, and by his unrestrained access to the archives of England and France, it would be, we are persuaded, impossible to point to a sentence in his volumes, penned for the gratification of a prejudice personal or national.

Upon the whole, we dismiss his work with unqualified satisfaction. Its extent required a patience of labor, which few men could have brought to the task. To these have been added rigid literary as well as moral integrity, and that love of his theme which engaged him in supplementary and illustrative researches in this country and Europe, of the most important and interesting character. Mr. Sparks must not look for his reward to pecuniary compensation. Notwithstanding Mr. Moore's recent complimentary remarks on the splendid dowry which literature now brings to those who espouse her, we doubt not he has been as well paid for the lightest of his own graceful effusions by the Mæcenas of Albemarle Street as Mr. Sparks will be for his ten years of unremitting and conscientious labor. His reward has been already in part enjoyed ; it must be found in the consciousness of laboriously and worthily performing a noble work ; — in the conviction, that he has contributed to give a wider diffusion, and a more abiding permanence to the fame of Washington ; and that, whenever the authority of the greatest and best of chieftains and patriots is appealed to in all coming time, it will be in some association with his own name and labors.

ART. III. — *Proceedings of the American Health Convention, assembled in Boston, May 30th, 1838, with Resolutions and Addresses.* Boston : Office of the Graham Journal. 8vo. pp. 16.

WE cannot profess to have kept ourselves *au courant* of this last of the forms of agitation which signalize these stirring times. We see from the advertisements, that books upon the subject of spare diet are succeeding one another with marvellous speed ; but, as to reading any of them, we are content to do better with our time. It seems, that they have made